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LOAVES AND FISHES

Loaves and Fishes

*A Study of the Miracles, of the
Resurrection, and of the Future
Life, in the Light of Modern
Psychic Knowledge*

By

Hereward Carrington

Director of the American Psychical Institute;

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"Modern Psychical Phenomena," etc.



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BINDERY OCT 25 1943



DEDICATED TO
MY WIFE
MARIE SWEET CARRINGTON
WITH DEEPEST APPRECIATION

PREFACE

It is hoped not only that this book will prove to be of interest to the reader, but that it may also serve several other useful purposes. First, that it may re-stimulate interest in the historic phenomena and documents bearing upon the life of Christ, and offer a new viewpoint concerning these manifestations; second, that it may be a help and consolation to those in need of such mental and spiritual comfort.

Doubtless this book will be criticized and perhaps severely attacked by those not in sympathy with its conclusions. If so, it is regrettable, but it cannot be helped. The author has stated the truth as he sees it, and if this does not happen to coincide with the views of some others—well, let them write a book in reply!

The title of this book might well have been *The Psychic Life of Christ*, since this is its main theme, dealing as it does with His miracles and teachings, from the standpoint of modern psychic science. I write not as a theologian but as a psychical researcher; and if I seem at times to have stressed unduly the Spiritualistic philosophy, it should be understood that this is because I deem it the most rational one, as a superstructure built upon a set of facts and observable phenomena. In this book I write not only as a researcher, but as a sympathetic exponent of the views expressed,

PREFACE

and of the doctrine based upon the psychic material which we, *as* researchers, study.

It is my hope that the book may prove helpful and stimulating to others, and perhaps cause them to undertake the study of this much misunderstood but fascinating field of research.

I wish here to express my appreciation for assistance in the preparation of this book, and in the fairly extensive research necessitated, to my wife, to Mrs. Helen C. Lambert, and to Mrs. Ellen Dunlap Hopkins.

H. C.

CONTENTS

	PAGE
PREFACE	vii
I. THE BIBLE AS A RECORD OF PSYCHIC PHENOMENA	I
II. THE LIFE OF CHRIST: HISTORIC BACKGROUND	21
III. THE MYSTERY OF THE MISSING YEARS IN HIS LIFE	32
IV. ANALOGIES OF HIS LIFE WITH THE LIVES OF OTHER "MESSIAHS"	36
V. THE PROBLEM OF CHRIST'S 'MIRACLES'	48
VI. PSYCHIC PHENOMENA—THE KEY TO THESE ENIGMAS	59
VII. EVIDENCES OF PSYCHIC PHENOMENA IN THE LIFE OF CHRIST	97
VIII. HIS KNOWLEDGE OF PSYCHIC LAWS AND POWERS	109
IX. THE SO-CALLED "NATURE-MIRACLES"	117
X. HIS HEALING MIRACLES CONSIDERED AS PSYCHIC PHENOMENA	127

CONTENTS

	PAGE
XI. DEMONIACAL POSSESSION	147
XII. "SPEAKING WITH TONGUES" AND THE PSYCHIC POWERS OF THE APOSTLES	157
XIII. THE RESURRECTION OF JESUS AS A PSYCHIC PHENOMENON	163
XIV. THE FUTURE LIFE IN THE LIGHT OF PSYCHIC SCIENCE	179
XV. CONCLUSION	267
REFERENCES	271

LOAVES AND FISHES

I

THE BIBLE AS A RECORD OF PSYCHIC PHENOMENA

OUR Bible is divided into two parts: The Old and the New Testaments. In a certain sense, there is no actual connection between them; at the same time they are bound into one volume, and constant references are made in the New Testament to passages in the Old. Therefore, they are related by certain historic bonds. The older book consists primarily in a history of the Jews, with the addition of certain poetic, philosophical and prophetic material, intermixed with legends and speculations borrowed for the most part from the Babylonians and Egyptians. The newer portion consists of various accounts of the life, death, miracles and teachings of Christ; also of events following His death, concluding with certain symbolic, prophetic visions and 'revelations.'

It is my belief that new and valuable light may be thrown upon this mass of historic and semi-historic material by reason of the newer discoveries and investigations which have been conducted in the realm of psychical research; and, further, that psychic phenomena do in fact serve to illumine and render intelligible to us the 'miraculous' phenomena recorded in both the Old and the New Testaments, and, in a sense, to vindicate their historic importance and validity.

Viewed from this standpoint, the *uniqueness* of these

LOAVES AND FISHES

miracles must necessarily be denied. We can no longer believe that they were wrought by some supernatural Being, merely by reason of the fact that He was the Son of God, and hence Divine. This orthodox, theological conception of the miracles can no longer be maintained. But is it not true that only a limited number of persons still hold to this extreme view, or cling to this tradition?

Assuredly the tendency now-a-days is to disbelieve and discredit such 'miracles' altogether. The rapid growth of scepticism and rationalism (healthy enough up to a point) has served to undermine all faith in a spiritual world, and the miraculous elements in the Bible are now commonly regarded as myths and fables.

This attitude I believe to be erroneous—just as the attitude of the orthodox theologian is erroneous. Some middle ground must be found, some sensible and rational viewpoint, which will permit us to regard these accounts as basically historic, while at the same time discounting their transcendental supernaturalism. This, I believe, can be attained only by accepting the validity of psychic phenomena, and comparing the older miracles with them. The latter may then be shown to be genuinely supernormal, without being necessarily supernatural, in the older meaning of that term. This is, to me, a perfectly justifiable viewpoint to take, and will I trust offend no one—believer or unbeliever.

In order to obtain a certain historic perspective, when dealing with the miraculous elements contained in the New Testament and the works and teachings attributed to Christ, it is necessary to summarize first of all,

LOAVES AND FISHES

though briefly, the accounts of like nature which are contained in the Old Testament, since a certain historic relationship exists between them. Having done so, we shall be in a better position to pass on to the somewhat similar accounts contained in the newer book, which deal mainly with the biographical and so-called 'supernatural' elements in the life of Christ. It is to these that this work is primarily devoted, while the implications and the newer conception of a future life are given in some detail in the final chapter—which is written from the standpoint of Spiritualistic philosophy—assuming this to be valid and in some manner representative of the truth. (This I have assumed in order to make the argument clear and precise.) Let us then see what may be said regarding these older 'miracles' from our newer standpoint, *viz.*, that of present-day psychic science.

PSYCHIC PHENOMENA IN THE OLD TESTAMENT

It is hardly necessary to emphasize the fact that the Old Testament—like the New—is filled with examples of psychic phenomena. Dreams, visions, prophecies, telepathic and clairvoyant manifestations, spiritistic experiences, inspiration—these and many others are to be found within its pages. There are Spiritualists who see evidence of typical 'communications' in the conversations between men and angels; of 'direct writing' in the Ten Commandments, written by 'the finger of God' on the stone tablets handed to Moses on the mountain-top; of séances held behind closed doors; of mediumistic trances and of typical spiritual warnings

LOAVES AND FISHES

when 'the Lord God' spoke to one of the great spiritual leaders or prophets, in the earlier records. There may be more than a substratum of truth in these contentions, but I shall not emphasize them here. Quite aside from these debatable questions, there are numerous instances in the Old Testament which are obviously straightforward records of genuine psychic phenomena, and a brief summary of the more important of these can hardly fail to be of interest.

Quite naturally, dreams occupy a prominent place, since they have intrigued and fascinated men since the dawn of history. In Gen. 20:3, we have an instance of a supernormal dream, for Abimelech is told the truth concerning Sarah, whom Abraham had tried to palm off as his sister—whereas she was really his wife—in order to protect his own skin. (The facts were told to Abimelech in a dream.) In Gen. 28:12-17, is the account of Jacob's interesting symbolical dream, wherein he saw the 'ladder ascending to heaven.' In Gen. 37:5-10, may be found the account of Joseph's dream of the sheaves, obviously illustrative of 'repressed desire.' In Gen. 40:8-13, Joseph interprets the dreams of the butler and baker of Pharaoh, who were in prison, this being the first account of a 'psycho-analysis' known to us. In Gen. 41:1-36, are narrated Pharaoh's two dreams, together with their interpretations; these so pleased and impressed Pharaoh that he gave Joseph a gold ring, a wife, and a chariot and made him sub-ruler over the land of Egypt.

The whole of the second chapter of Daniel is taken up with an account of the dream which King Nebu-

LOAVES AND FISHES

chadnezzar had had, but which he had forgotten. That he might have this dream recalled to him, and its interpretation given, the king called upon all the magicians, astrologers, sorcerers and Chaldeans in his kingdom, telling them that if they succeeded in recalling and interpreting the dream, they would be richly rewarded, while if they failed, they would be cut to pieces! They replied, naturally enough, that this was impossible; "there is not a man upon the earth that can shew the king's matter"; adding that if the king himself could recall his dream, they would be glad to interpret it for him. At this, Nebuchadnezzar became furiously angry, and issued an order that every 'wise man' in the kingdom should be killed!

At this critical juncture, Daniel was brought to court by Arioch, who had been originally sent to slay him. Daniel had stated to Arioch that he could discover and interpret the king's dream—which he then proceeded to do. But how did Daniel ascertain the contents of the king's dream, supplying him with a basis for its interpretation? In a very interesting manner. *He himself dreamed it*; he obtained this by direct telepathic transfer from Nebuchadnezzar himself, for Daniel explicitly states (29) that 'as for thee, O king, *thy thoughts came into my mind* upon my bed, what should come to pass thereafter: and he that revealeth secrets maketh known to thee what shall come to pass.' Daniel disclaims any ability on his own part in this discovery, however, for he says (30), 'but as for me this secret is not revealed to me for any wisdom that I have more than any living . . .' In this, he evidently recognizes

LOAVES AND FISHES

fully the inspirational and supernormal character of his revelation.

In Daniel 4:4-28, there is an account of another dream of Nebuchadnezzar's, which Daniel similarly interpreted, after the magicians had failed to do so. In this case, however, the king fortunately remembered the dream, which he narrated to Daniel.

Several instances of *clairvoyance* are to be found in the Old Testament records, of which one or two may be cited. In I Sam. 9:20, we read that Samuel said to Saul: 'as for thine asses that were lost three days ago, set not thy mind on them; for they are found.' Several cases of like character could be referred to.

In Numbers 22:27-35, may be found the interesting story of Balaam's ass, which clairvoyantly saw the apparition before Balaam himself did—just as animals seemingly perceive phantasmal forms in haunted places today. It is perhaps hardly necessary to say that the 'voice' which Balaam heard, on this occasion, was heard clairaudently—just as Samuel heard a 'voice' calling him, which he at first disregarded and only answered eventually, because of its insistence (I Sam. 3:4-14).

In Numbers 11:24-26, a 'voice' was heard, after which the elders all began to prophesy, and even the two men who were left in the camp—they began to prophesy also! There are two very curious and suggestive references in Num. 27:19 and 23, where it is stated that 'he gave him a charge' by placing his hands upon him, seeming to indicate the transference of psychic power. Job (4:15-16) gives an excellent description of his

LOAVES AND FISHES

subjective experiences, when passing through a psychic experience, for he says that 'then a spirit passed before my face; the hair of my flesh stood up: it stood still, but I could not discern the form thereof.' In I Sam. 19:20-21, it is said that three separate groups of messengers sent to David all in turn began to prophesy. The account of the séance with the witch of Endor is too well known to necessitate more than a mere reference to it (I Sam. 28:3-20).

A very precise account of a materialized hand and 'independent writing' is given in Daniel (5:5) where we read:

'In the same hour came forth fingers of a man's hand, and wrote over against the candlestick over against the plaster of the wall of the king's palace: and the king saw the part of the hand that wrote.'

Where is the difference between this and the experience of Sir William Crookes: 'A luminous hand came down from the upper part of the room, and after hovering near me for a few seconds, took the pencil from my hand, rapidly wrote on a sheet of paper, threw the pencil down, and then rose up over our heads, gradually fading into darkness' (*Researches in Spiritualism*, p. 93).

Two unusual and interesting cases are also referred to in Daniel. The first of these relates how he was thrown into the lion's den (6:16-23) escaping unscathed—as Yogis and holy men in the Orient are said to be immune from wild beasts, while they sit, meditating, in the jungle. The second tells how Shadrach, Meshach and Abed-nego were cast into the 'fiery furnace,' but walked about in it unharmed, being released

LOAVES AND FISHES

in consequence (3:19-30). Students of psychic phenomena will surely see in this a close resemblance to the fire-walking ceremonies which may be seen in various parts of the world, in which devotees walk about in the fire without being burned; or to Home's manifestations, witnessed by Lord Adare and many others, when Home handled red-hot coals without injury, though others touching them were severely burned (see pp. 64-66). The analogies in all these cases are very striking, once the reality of psychic phenomena be granted.

In I Sam. 10:1-9, there are made predictions which are certainly indicative of the fact that the future may be envisioned in detail. This is not merely a concatenation of doleful prophecies concerning the dire calamities which will befall the nation—as we so often find in the Old Testament Prophets—but a series of statements concerning the future movements of Saul: what he will see, hear, say and do, and what will transpire in consequence. These are precisely the *sort* of predictions we find in our modern cases—incidents of a personal nature, relating to the life of the percipient. It is true that many of these visional experiences, as narrated in the Old Testament, are symbolical, and the seer has great difficulty in finding their meaning and interpretation himself. In the present instance, however, this is not the case; the visions relate to a series of clear-cut and detailed incidents. Let us list these *seriatim*. Samuel told Saul that:

He would find two men by Rachel's sepulchre.
They would tell him that his asses had been found.
His father had left the care of the asses.

LOAVES AND FISHES

His father was sorrowing for him.
He would journey thence to the plain of Tabor.
There he would meet three men going to Beth-el.
One would be carrying three kids.
Another would be carrying three loaves of bread.
The other would be carrying a bottle of wine.
They would salute him, and give him two loaves of bread.

Then he would come to the Hill of God.
After that he would meet a company of prophets, carrying various musical instruments.
They would prophesy.
Whereupon Saul himself would also prophesy.
After that he would go to Gilgal, where Samuel would join him.
But that first he would remain there seven days.

It is obvious that, if the Biblical narrative gives us anything like an accurate account of the facts, 'chance coincidence' is absolutely ruled out in this series of predictions—all of which, it is said, 'came to pass.'

There are certain passages in the Old Testament which might be held to indicate 'dowsing' or water-finding by means of the divining-rod. Thus (Ex. 17:6) Moses was instructed to go and 'smite the rock' and 'there shall come water out of it, that the people may drink.' 'And Moses did so in the sight of the elders of Israel.' It can hardly be supposed that smiting a rock with a stave would bring forth water, but it might well be that he located water by means of a divining rod, and that active work upon the spot soon brought forth water. In Num. 20:10-11, a similar incident is narrated, which might also be held to be a case of dowsing.

LOAVES AND FISHES

Cases of partial 'transfiguration' are noted in the older records. In Ex. 34:29-35, it is stated that Moses' face 'shone' when he came down from Mount Sinai—so much so that he was compelled to put a veil over it for the time being.

There are not lacking accounts, in the Old Testament, of apparent 'raising of the dead,' as for instance (I Kings 17:17-24) when Elijah raised the widow's son 'after the spirit had gone out of him'; and (II Kings 4:18-37) when Elisha similarly raised a dead son. Both these cases, it is interesting to note, were followed by a semi-miraculous multiplication of food, and the feeding of a number of persons from very limited resources. These incidents, of course, furnish us with interesting analogies to the New Testament cases, in which Christ fed the multitude—especially when we remember that the Jews thought that Christ might be the re-embodiment of Elijah or Elisha. They were His logical predecessors in the performance of the same 'miracle.'

This may conclude our brief summary of psychic phenomena as recorded in the Old Testament. The fact of the matter is that the Bible is filled with references to psychic phenomena, which, if interpreted in this way, make of it a valuable reference book to the later historic cases of like character. Those who discourage the study of psychic phenomena on the theory that they are 'opposed to the teachings of the Bible' would do well to recognize the fact that there are scores of such manifestations scattered throughout its pages!

There are many teachers of the Christian religions

LOAVES AND FISHES

who hold to the idea that no authentic preternatural happenings of this nature have occurred since Biblical days. We, on the other hand, contend that there has been an unbroken stream of psychical phenomena from that period until the present time, and that they still occur. A glance through the pages of history, with this possibility in view, will justify my statement.

LATER PSYCHIC PHENOMENA

Coincidental with, and overlapping, the early Christian period were the Oracles of antiquity, which were in turn followed by the Saints and Mystics of the Middle Ages, and these again by our modern seers and exponents of mediumistic and psychical phenomena.

A brief résumé of this intervening historic period will serve to show the unbroken continuity of these psychic happenings from the earliest times to the present day.

The ancient Oracles, succeeding the Prophets of the Biblical period, flourished first in Greece and subsequently in Rome. There can be no doubt that these were often remarkably accurate in their predictions, and that the majority of the intellectuals believed in them as implicitly as did the unlettered. Both the Greeks and the Romans were highly sceptical and critical, and it seems impossible not to believe that, had the Oracular utterances been erroneous in large part, this fact would have been emphasized, and would have been seized upon as a means of discrediting them. As the

LOAVES AND FISHES

Rev. T. Dempsey says (in his work *The Delphic Oracles*):

“ . . . Was the Delphic Oracle genuine, or was it a mere sham, a conscious fraud, at least on the part of the ministers, trading on the credulity of an uncritical and superstitious age? An institution which for centuries maintained its credit more or less unimpaired, whose origin was lost in the twilight of antiquity, and whose career extended well into Christian times; an institution which numbered among its clientèle men of the highest intellects as well as those of simple, unquestioning faith—surely such an institution would seem to claim some better foundation than mere fraud? Certainly we have the voice of antiquity proclaiming the veracity of the Oracle. . . . Certainly there seems to have been no conscious fraud at least on the part of the Priestess; her frenzy was very real; for we are told by Plutarch that, on one occasion, she died as the result of the violent agitation produced by the prophetic furor. . . .

“Was the Pythia’s mind exalted under inspiration to a supernatural knowledge? Here we must bear in mind certain important facts. In the first place, the Pythia was a very ordinary personage who had ‘gained nothing from art or training or help of any sort.’ Secondly, she seems not to have known beforehand the nature of the questions submitted to her. And yet what extraordinary responses is she not said to have given on certain occasions! . . .” *

* See also F. W. H. Myers’s *Classical Essays; The Sibylline Oracles*, by the Reverend H. N. Bate, etc.

LOAVES AND FISHES

The famous test-oracle of Croesus is perhaps the best known of all, the story being told in full by Herodotus (I, 21-25). Croesus, King of Lydia, wished to make war on Cyrus, but feared to do so without the express sanction of Heaven. This was to be learned, of course, through the Oracles. But it was first necessary to test the veracity of these. Accordingly, he despatched envoys to six of the best-known oracles then existing; those of Delphi, Dodona, Branchidæ, Zeus-Ammon, Trophonius, and Amphiaraus. On the hundredth day from their departure, the envoys were to ask these several oracles what was Croesus doing at home in Sardis at a particular moment. He had carefully kept the secret to himself, and had chosen an action which was beyond all possible conjecture.

Four oracles failed; Amphiaraus was nearly right. Delphi alone succeeded perfectly. This was the response, as given by Herodotus:

I can count the sands, and I can measure the Ocean;
I have ears for the silent, and know what the dumb man
meaneth;

Lo! on my sense there striketh the smell of a shell-
covered tortoise,
Boiling now on a fire, with the flesh of a lamb, in a
cauldron,—

Brass is the vessel below, and brass the cover above it.

And what was Croesus actually doing at the time? We are told that 'on the departure of his messengers he had set himself to think what was most impossible for any one to conceive of his doing, and then, waiting till the day agreed on came, he acted as he had determined.

LOAVES AND FISHES

He took a tortoise and a lamb, and cutting them in pieces with his own hands, boiled them both together, in a brazen cauldron, covered over with a lid which was also of brass.'

Many similar instances could be given, seeming to prove that clairvoyant visions were frequently obtained by the Pythoness. Instances of apparent telepathy are also common, as well as prophetic visions, involving the future. In other words, supernormal information was seemingly obtained, very often, much as it was by the ancient prophets, and as it is today by our modern Seers.

These Oracles form a sort of natural transition from the older Prophets to the Saints and Mystics of the Middle Ages. From their days until our times the stream of supernormal information seems never to have been broken.

The analogies which exist between the manifestations that are alleged to have occurred in the lives of the Saints, and modern psychic phenomena, are of course numerous. Levitation of the physical body, lights, scents, the movements of objects without contact, etc., were all observed in their presence, just as they are noted in the presence of certain psychics and mediums today. St. Joseph of Cupertino was constantly 'levitated' from the ground, but so were Home, Stainton Moses, and many other moderns. Light irradiated from their bodies—but so it has in other, newer instances; and so on. Mr. Andrew Lang, in his *Cock Lane and Common Sense* (p. 81), has drawn up a comparative list of the phenomena noted in both sets of cases. The

LOAVES AND FISHES

parallels between them are many and striking. In his interesting little book entitled *The Wonders of the Saints*, the Reverend Fielding-Ould has made a series of detailed comparisons; from it I quote a few illustrative passages:

"St. Ignatius Loyola, founder of the Society of Jesus, was, while at prayer, seen by one John Pascal to be raised more than a foot above the ground. St. Philip Neri was levitated 'about a palm' from his sick bed, in full view of his attendants. St. Joseph Cupertino, while celebrating the Mysteries in 1649, before the Duke of Brunswick, was bodily raised a hand's breath above the level of the altar, and remained there six or seven minutes. St. James, of Illyricum (d. 1485) was levitated while at prayer; St. Dominic, at the Holy Communion, a cubit from the ground. Much the same thing is told of St. Dunstan, St. Philip Benite, St. Cajetan, St. Albert of Sicily, and St. Bernard Ptolomaei. St. Richard, his chancellor, testifies that he saw St. Edmund, Archbishop of Canterbury, 'raised high in the air with knees bent and arms stretched out.' Eunapius, the Platonic philosopher, who wrote in 380, relates that Iamblicus was often raised ten cubits in the air, and was surrounded by a bright light. . . .

"The Jesuit priest Chaumont . . . saw his colleague J. C. Daniel, who had recently died at the age of fifty. . . . St. Angela (1540) saw in a luminous haze her sister, for whose welfare she had trembled . . . as she had died without the last rites of the Church. . . . Lubert Berner saw the apparition of his friend, the pious John Ketel. . . . St. Thomas Aquinas saw the

LOAVES AND FISHES

apparition of Romanus, whom he had known as master of Theology in the famous university of Paris. . . .

"The appearance of bright light playing round them is not very uncommon in cases of persons of great religious exaltation. Professor William James gives several instances of what he calls 'pseudo-hallucinatory luminous phenomena,' in his *Varieties of Religious Experience*. Many eye-witnesses testified that they saw St. Colomba continually surrounded by a dazzling golden light. . . ."

It is hardly necessary to remind the reader of the numerous cases of *stigmata* which have been recorded—paralleled by several cases of recent date; the visions and voices of Joan of Arc,* of Socrates,† the extraordinary experiences of St. Theresa, etc. All these bear a striking similarity to the newer cases, which have been investigated of late years by scientific men. Even the 'odor of sanctity' which was reported emanating from many of the saints has its parallel, for example, in the case of Stainton Moses, where perfume was wafted about the room, and even exuded in liquid form from his head! It is hardly necessary to say that this list could be continued almost indefinitely, but enough has been said, perhaps, to indicate the curious and striking analogies between many of these historic cases and the more recent instances, which have been noted in spiritistic séances, or which have occurred more or less spontaneously.

* *The Voices of Jeanne D'Arc*, by Andrew Lang, *Proc. S. P. R.*, Vol. XI, pp. 198-212, etc.

† *The Dæmon of Socrates*, by F. W. H. Myers, *Proc. S. P. R.*, Vol. V, pp. 522-47.

LOAVES AND FISHES

The gist of the matter is, very obviously, that these extraordinary phenomena which were recorded in past times *probably existed*—but were not due to the ‘supernatural agencies’ postulated at the time in order to account for them. That is, genuine psychic manifestations were probably noted, which were attributed to ‘demons’ or to ‘divine agency.’ We believe that we are now beginning to understand the fundamental psychic laws underlying these phenomena, and what may be true and what false regarding them. Much the same holds true with regard to so-called ‘witchcraft.’

We are accustomed to think that witchcraft represents nothing more than the grossest form of superstition and imposture. There is reason to think, however, that—buried amidst this welter of blood and terror—there may have been genuine psychic phenomena, similar to those noted in our own day. Supernormal manifestations may perhaps have been noted, from time to time, serving to keep the belief alive in the minds of the more intelligent. There is, in fact, considerable evidence to show that such *was* the case. In Vol. I of *Phantasms of the Living* may be found an illuminating ‘Note on Witchcraft’ by Edmund Gurney—based upon a minute examination of some 260 books, and a large number of contemporary trials. Gurney points out that the more ‘miraculous’ features may easily be accounted for, being due to ignorance, superstition, total lack of first-hand evidence, etc., and “because the sciences which should have explained them were still unborn.” On the other hand, amidst this mass of illusion, we find frequent accounts of psychic happenings very simi-

LOAVES AND FISHES

lar to those reported in our own day; and Gurney concludes that "the part of the case for Witchcraft which is now an exploded superstition had never, even in its own day, any real evidential foundation; while the part which had a real evidential foundation is now more firmly established than ever. . . ."

Coupled with the belief in witchcraft was the belief in malign spiritual influences, which has existed for ages, and which to a great extent dominates the lives of savages and primitive peoples today. Throughout the Middle Ages this belief also played a great part, and was intermixed with witchcraft in its purely Satanic aspect. One has only to read such books as C. M. Burnett's *Philosophy of Spirits*, W. Scott's *The Existence of Evil Spirits Proved*, T. F. Coakley's *Spiritism the Modern Satanism*, etc., to show that this belief has existed up to our own time. Theosophical and Catholic writings are also filled with references to the subject. It is inextricably mixed with the theory of spirit obsession. In short, the belief in evil spirits is far older than the belief in beneficent spirits. Only since the advent of modern spiritualism has this latter conception taken firm hold upon the public mind.

It is hardly necessary to say that modern science does not believe in the existence of any such entities, nor have psychic students encountered them, as they are commonly supposed to exist. In his *Spiritism and Psychology*, Professor Flournoy has analyzed a number of cases of this type, and was invariably enabled to show that the 'deceiving spirits' were merely manifestations of the subject's subconscious mind—mas-

LOAVES AND FISHES

querading and pretending to be the outside influences in question.* There is some evidence, it is true, that certain *human* intelligences of a malevolent character may exist, just as we encounter 'bad men' in this life. But it must be understood that this is quite a different matter from the acceptance of evil, non-human intelligences, for the existence of which we have no respectable evidence whatever.

And if this be true today, it is obviously true of bygone days also, both historic and pre-historic.

These occurrences, in the light of present-day psychic knowledge, become intelligible to us, and we can now begin to understand what may have occurred that gave rise to these accounts. They may have been basically true, but the conclusions and inferences drawn from the observed occurrences were erroneous, naturally, since the natural sciences were then virtually unborn. Yet the psychic phenomena giving rise to these beliefs undoubtedly existed, and in view of our modern scientific investigations a rational interpretation of them is now possible, superseding these older superstitions and beliefs.

This same rational viewpoint, when applied to the miracles as performed by Christ, similarly enables us to interpret and comprehend them, and to perceive that they too were genuine supernormal phenomena of an extraordinary but not altogether unique character.

In the pages which follow, therefore, we shall proceed to study these 'miraculous' elements in the life of

* *Spiritism and Psychology*, by Th. Flournoy, translated by H. Carrington (1911).

LOAVES AND FISHES

Christ, from this, our more modern viewpoint, and in the course of this study we shall perceive that they occupy an outstanding position in the continuous stream of psychic manifestations throughout the ages.

II

THE LIFE OF CHRIST: HISTORIC BACKGROUND

THE traditional life of Christ is too well known to need any extensive reiteration; it records that He was born in Bethlehem, of parents named Mary and Joseph, a carpenter. Various miraculous events are said to have surrounded this birth: the immaculate conception, a Star in the East, a visit from the three wise men, an escape from a general butchery of infants, and other incidents of like nature.

During boyhood and early years He is said to have lived in Nazareth, but from the age of twelve until His twenty-eighth or thirtieth year there is a gap in these recordings. At this time He suddenly reappeared, was baptized by John, and then began His public ministry, in which He travelled about the country, preached, taught, gathered disciples about Him, and performed 'miracles.'

Finally He was betrayed, tried before Pontius Pilate, condemned and crucified. He 'rose from the dead,' appeared to His disciples and was then said to have left this earthly sphere: and here the recording ends.

Such, in briefest outline, is the generally accepted account of His background, as a man and as the divine being whom we encounter in the four Gospels, and

LOAVES AND FISHES

whose acts are described in the Epistles and in Revelation.

Volumes have been written upon the subject of how much of this data is based upon historic fact. It is not my province to deal with this controversial material, but rather to present certain aspects of the life of Christ that have been neglected in the majority of books dealing with His life and teachings.

In studying the life of Christ, the first question which naturally arises is: Was there in truth a historical personage by the name of Jesus Christ? Did such a person actually exist at all? Aside from the Gospel narratives, what evidence is there of the historicity of Jesus? A brief summary of the *pros* and *cons* of this question will doubtless prove of interest.

One of the first works of this character was that written by Professor Dupuis, entitled *The Origin of All Cults*. It was issued in 1795, and was a serious attempt to trace all religious beliefs to Solar and other myths—including of course the Christian religion.

This was followed, in 1835, by a learned, though entirely sceptical, *Life of Jesus*, by Strauss, a German Rationalist. Mr. Robertson, in his *Christianity and Mythology*, *Pagan Christs*, etc., first raised the question seriously as to whether such a person as Christ had really existed. These books brought forth several from the pens of other Rationalists: one by F. C. Conybeare, *Myth, Magic and Morals*, in which he attacked the arguments advanced by Mr. Robertson.

Ecce Deus, by Professor W. B. Smith, of Tulane University, also attacks the historicity of Jesus; but a

LOAVES AND FISHES

work by Professor Drews, *Witnesses to the Historicity of Jesus*, takes the opposite stand, contending that a Sun God has been transformed into a man by his followers. A somewhat similar view is advanced by Doctor P. L. Couchoud, whose *Enigma of Jesus* was translated into English by Sir J. G. Frazer. Mr. McCabe's little book *Did Jesus Ever Live?* is an impartial summary of the available evidence; while Mr. G. R. S. Mead contributed to the controversy a scholarly volume entitled *Was Jesus Born 100 B.C.?* John Stewart's recently published *When Did Our Lord Actually Live?* offers new light on the old problem.

Aside from the Gospel narratives, then, what material is there in Jewish and Pagan writings bearing upon this question of the historicity of Jesus?

Doctor Burch, an eminent English theologian, in reviewing Doctor Klausner's important book, *Jesus of Nazareth*, made the informing statement that there are, in all, only *twenty-four* lines relating to Christ to be found, of which four are admittedly spurious. Of the remaining twenty lines, twelve are to be found in Josephus, and eight in Latin literature. The reference in Josephus is now seriously questioned by scholars. The Latin references are scattered between Tacitus and Pliny the Younger. These likewise have been called into question; but, even granting their authenticity, they are mere passing references—which perhaps is what we should expect, inasmuch as Christianity had hardly taken root at the time, and was probably regarded by them as a local religious-mystical movement of little consequence. It will be seen, therefore, that there is

LOAVES AND FISHES

little historic evidence available, concerning the life of Christ, apart from the Gospel narratives themselves. To these we must accordingly turn.*

There is no consecutive and systematic biography of Christ in the Gospels; in many places the accounts are contradictory, and they represent, for the most part, a series of detached anecdotes. The genealogies of Jesus, as given respectively by Matthew and Luke, differ completely. Both endeavor to trace His descent from David, but whereas Matthew gives 28 generations, Luke gives 43, and in these two—apart from David and Christ Himself—not a single name agrees! The account of the Virgin birth of Jesus is not mentioned by Mark and John, and is differently related in Matthew and Luke. According to Matthew, an Angel appeared to Joseph; in Luke's account it appeared to Mary. The inscription placed over Christ's head, on the Cross, is differently worded in all four Gospels. Matthew tells of a number of supernatural phenomena which coincided with the Crucifixion; no mention is made of these in the other Gospels. And so on. These discrepancies are sufficient to show us that the four Gospels were not

* Mr. R. T. Herford has carefully collected all the anonymous references to Jesus in the Talmud in *Christianity in Talmud and Midrash*. It is very evident that these indicate a complete belief that Jesus existed as a man. This is further borne out by the Pauline Epistles, which, generally acknowledged as genuine, speak of Jesus in human terms throughout. These are early writings, and never seem to have been questioned by the Jews in Jerusalem. These subsidiary evidences force us to the conclusion that Christ was a historic personage, unquestioned by numbers of almost contemporary witnesses, and especially by the Jews, who disliked the Christians and would certainly have done so, had this been possible. We can only conclude that it is reasonable to believe in the historicity of Jesus, aside from the Gospel narratives.

LOAVES AND FISHES

written by eye-witnesses, but were evidently compiled some time after Christ's death, and are made up of a number of reports and stories told about Christ, a fact now generally admitted. No Christian writer mentions any of the four Gospels until a hundred years after the death of Christ, or makes any clear and certain quotation from any one of them. The Gospels, as we know them, evidently took gradual shape under the hands of various compilers and editors; as such they do not, of course, represent contemporary, historic documents.*

It is important to bear this in mind, in considering the 'miraculous' elements contained within the Gospels

* Regarding the relative value and historicity of the four Gospels, the following is the pronouncement of Professor Bruce Curry of the Union Theological Seminary, who was consulted as to the results of the latest researches in this field. Replying to my inquiries, he wrote:

"... Scholars are inclined to think that back of each of the synoptic gospels there may have been a more original form. Thus they speak of an 'Ur-Marcus,' and a possible document called 'M,' which may go back to the Matthew who was contemporary with Jesus. They feel that these more original documents have been edited by later hands. With this understanding, they still consider Mark the oldest of the gospels, and perhaps the most reliable as to the chronology of the life of Jesus. They are quite sure that both Matthew and Luke had before them two written stories. The first was the gospel of Mark in some form. The second is referred to by some of them as the 'Second Source' but more loosely and perhaps incorrectly as the 'Logia.' If one should seek to arrange the three synoptic gospels in order of degree of validity and authenticity, he would probably have to put them in this order: Mark, Luke, Matthew. The Fourth Gospel, as you doubtless know, is in a class by itself, and belongs not only to a later date but to a different type of literature. The best recent discussion of these problems you will find in Canon Streeter's book *The Four Gospels*. . . ."

The above is interesting not only because it indicates the relative historicity of the Gospels, but because it shows us that modern scholars are far from accepting the literal 'inspiration' of these documents, and hence their unquestioned accuracy—as they *were* accepted by theologians until relatively recent times. In considering the accounts of the miracles and other material, we must therefore keep these factors in view.

LOAVES AND FISHES

themselves. It is a matter of common knowledge that stories of this kind grow in wonder and detail with each re-telling. It is very evident that this growth of the miraculous occurred in the Gospel narratives also; the further removed from the original event, the more extraordinary the account becomes. Various interpolations have certainly been added, and this is now acknowledged by all broad-minded clergymen. The only question which remains is: granting all this, does there yet remain a solid substratum of historic fact, which would enable us to reconstruct a life of Jesus, and a general picture of His works and mission?

The answer to this must be in the affirmative. Such a person as Jesus Christ undoubtedly lived, taught, preached, performed remarkable cures, was tried, convicted and crucified. Thus far at least we are on solid ground, which no subsequent criticism is likely to controvert. The remaining question is: whether the other elements of His life—especially the miracles, as given in the Gospels—are historical also.

Sceptics and Rationalists have unhesitatingly replied to this question in the negative: devout Churchmen, with equal confidence, in the affirmative. It is undoubtedly true that certain exaggerations and interpolations have been made, which render the traditional accounts unhistoric. The position assumed in this book is that there is an undoubted substratum of truth in these accounts—far more than the average Rationalist would be willing to admit. In discussing the miracles, I have assumed that the Gospel accounts are more or less *accurate*, and have based my discussions upon that

LOAVES AND FISHES

assumption, *viz.*, the relative historicity of the accounts. This will at least render possible an impartial discussion of the evidence.

Assuming the Gospel accounts to be relatively accurate, then, I believe that an intelligible and reasonably acceptable interpretation of these 'miracles' may be offered—based largely upon recent discoveries and investigations in the field of psychical research.

That is my main contention, and the basis of this book: psychic phenomena give us the Key to these enigmas, and enable us to understand and interpret these so-called 'miracles.' It is no longer necessary to ridicule and reject them, as have sceptical writers in the past. We may accept them as actual occurrences, but they are no longer unique or miraculous, in the traditional sense of the term. They are paralleled by many similar phenomena, which have been observed throughout all history, and which are occurring in our own day. These manifestations are undoubtedly *supernormal*, in the sense that they are unusual and extraordinary, and cannot be accounted for by present-day science. They represent genuine phenomena, which have been well verified, and are now being studied by scientific men, in our modern laboratories. But they are neither unique nor 'divine'; nor do they run counter to the accredited Laws of Nature. In this sense, therefore, they are not 'miracles.' At the same time they cannot be accounted for by Naturalistic science. In the light of our newer researches, and viewed as psychic phenomena, the older and the newer 'miracles' are seen to offer many analogies; for the first time we are en-

LOAVES AND FISHES

abled to credit, as well as to understand, what actually occurred, when these older 'miracles' were accomplished.

The view here briefly enunciated will be elaborated in this book. Like all others it will doubtless be subjected to severe criticisms. I am well aware of the fact that psychic phenomena are not, as yet, accredited by official science, and that many of its conclusions are still *sub judice*. At the same time, rapid progress is being made in this field; laboratory methods are being more and more applied, and the main facts of psychical research are winning greater and greater acceptance. Concrete evidence for supernormal phenomena has been gathered and presented, and the accumulating evidence for human survival must now be given serious consideration by all those who wish to keep abreast of the times. Naturally, it would be impossible for me, within the limitations of this book, to present any *evidence* for such phenomena. This may be found in the official *Proceedings* of the various Societies for Psychical Research, and in the numerous books upon the subject which are now available, and to these the interested reader is referred. I can only state my position more or less dogmatically: that such supernormal facts do undoubtedly occur, and that, in the light of these occurrences, the Christian 'miracles' assume a new aspect, and become acceptable and intelligible to us, as they certainly did not before.

Viewed in this light, therefore, the life and works of Christ present new problems and assume new interest. His wonders become credible, and His esoteric teachings

LOAVES AND FISHES

intelligible. Christ never wrote anything Himself, so that we have to rely upon the accounts of others for His doings and sayings. These accounts are not 'inspired,' in the meaning usually understood; in this sense, the books of the Bible are not inspired. Inspiration can come only to *men*, and these inspired persons may write books and fill them with the results of their inspirations, but not with the inspiration itself. Doubtless, we are all 'sons of God,' and the parables and sayings of Jesus must often be interpreted symbolically—as He meant they should be.

The Bible naturally divides itself into four parts: 1st, The mythical and traditional. 2d, The historical. 3d, The ethical, or moral; and 4th, The inspirational and prophetic.

All four of these elements enter into both the Old and the New Testaments, in varying degrees. In addition to these natural divisions, however, I believe that, scattered throughout the Bible, may be found accounts of genuine supernormal, psychic phenomena, just as such accounts may be found scattered throughout all sacred and profane history, in every age of the world and in every country. No age and no clime has a monopoly upon these manifestations, any more than it has a monopoly on Truth. The spiritual and ethical teachings of Christ, so in keeping with those of the Essenes of His day,* are paralleled by similar teachings given to the world by other great spiritual teachers, just as His 'miracles' are paralleled by psychic manifestations in ancient times and in our own day. Viewed

* Cf. *Was Jesus an Essene?* by Dudley Wright.

LOAVES AND FISHES

in this light, His life and mission become luminous and grand. The recent evidence for human survival renders possible, once again, the idea of a spiritual world, and the acceptance of spiritual phenomena. Indeed, as Mr. F. W. H. Myers expressed it in his *Human Personality, and its Survival of Bodily Death* (II, p. 288):

"I venture now a bold saying; for I predict that, in consequence of the new evidence, all reasonable men, a century hence, will believe the Resurrection of Christ,* whereas, in default of the new evidence, no reasonable man, a century hence, would have believed it."

And again, in speaking of the importance of this new evidence, Myers goes on to say:

"This search for new facts is precisely what our Society (for Psychical Research) undertakes. Starting from various standpoints, we endeavor to carry the newer, the intellectual virtues into regions where dispassionate tranquillity has seldom yet been known. As compared with the claims of Theologians, we set before ourselves a humbler, yet a difficult, task. We do not seek to shape the clauses of the great Act of Faith, but merely to prove its preamble. *To prove the preamble of all religions*; to be able to say to theologian or to philosopher: 'Thus and thus we demonstrate that a spiritual world exists—a world of independent and abiding realities, not a mere "epiphenomenon" or transitory effect of the material world—a world of things, concrete and living, not a mere system of abstract ideas; now, therefore, reason on that world or feel towards it as

* Not of course a *physical* resurrection; a spiritual survival only is meant, perhaps in some 'spiritual body,' as St. Paul puts it.

LOAVES AND FISHES

you will.' This would indeed, in my view, be the weightiest service which any research could render to the deep disquiet of our time;—nay, to the *desiderium orbis catholici*, the world-old and world-wide desire." *

It is from this standpoint, therefore, that we propose to consider the life and works of Christ. Regarded thus, it will be found that His 'miracles' become understandable and acceptable to us, His teachings clarified and His moral and ethical sayings substantiated. All this, however, has only been rendered possible by the progress and corroboration afforded us by spiritual and psychic science. This I shall endeavor to justify and prove in the pages which follow.

* It has been said that the Protestant bases his faith upon 'spiritual ideals,' while the Catholic bases his belief upon 'supernatural realities.'

III

THE MYSTERY OF THE MISSING YEARS IN HIS LIFE

WE have seen that there was a gap in the recorded life of Jesus, covering a period of approximately eighteen years, from His twelfth year until He reached the age of twenty-eight or thirty. Whether or no this be the *precise* number of years (of which we have no account) does not matter for our present purposes. What does concern us, and very vitally, is that He reappeared after this lapse of time, was baptized and at once plunged into the tribulations of His ministry, teaching 'as one having authority.'

The problem immediately confronts us: What became of Jesus during those intervening years? Where was He and what was He doing? Above all, what happened to give Him the great spiritual impetus, which He evidently acquired, and confer upon Him the power which He seemingly possessed? Very evidently, He did not merely remain a carpenter, living a narrow life, circumscribed by His environment and content with His 'job.' Something extraordinary happened inside Him psychologically. And there is the obvious temptation to assume that He also left His native land, and sought wisdom and enlightenment in other countries, as have others before Him, and since.

This theory, that Christ visited the Orient in search

LOAVES AND FISHES

of wisdom, has had several sincere defenders. One of the most circumstantial and plausible of these accounts is that given in M. Nicholas Notovitch's book *The Unknown Life of Jesus Christ*. His contention is that Jesus visited Persia, India and Tibet, and in the latter country remained for some time in the Himis Monastery, where there is to be found an inscription giving a detailed account of "The Life of Saint Issa: Best of the Sons of Men." This is reproduced in M. Notovitch's book, together with what purports to be a page of the inscription in *facsimile*, an illustration of the Monastery in question, together with a wealth of detail concerning the 'missing years,' which are said to be faithfully recorded in the ms. in question. I need not enter into the details of this curious and fascinating book; suffice it to say that its authenticity is, to say the least, still *sub judice*; and the same may be said of other, similar accounts which have come to us from other sources.*

*Definite *legendary* material was secured by Doctor Nicholas Roerich, and published by him in his *Fiery Stronghold*, p. 287. This was to the effect that the Moslems of Srinagar told him that the crucified Christ, or Issa as they called Him, did not die on the Cross, but only lost consciousness; that His disciples rescued His body and cured Him; and that He afterwards became a teacher in a house in Srinagar. Doctor Roerich was told that there is an inscription-plate still in existence, stating that 'the son of Joseph' was buried there, and that strange perfumes and spontaneous cures occur in the vicinity.

There is also a temple in Puri, which is a center of Hindu pilgrimages. Between this temple and the sea there is a shrine dedicated to Christ (Issa), and in the center of the garden stands a cross. This is known as the Shri-Issa.

Doctor Roerich states that the story of his discovery of a ms. concerning Christ in a Tibetan Monastery was 'pure invention'—based apparently upon the *legendary* material which he had collected and published.

LOAVES AND FISHES

Be that as it may, the fact remains that the Evangelists are lacking in any precise information concerning this period of Christ's life, merely writing that He 'became filled with wisdom,' etc., which does not help us much! One is tempted to say that one guess is as good as another, and that no authentic data are as yet available concerning the bodily presence of Jesus during those eventful, intervening years.

But, if His bodily journeyings cannot be traced, His mental experiences must have been many and varied. I have spoken of those 'eventful' years, for the simple reason that, psychologically, they must have revealed avenues of supernal knowledge and illumination. A flood of psychic wisdom and power seems to have been poured upon Him. In this He was not unique; nearly all the great spiritual teachers the world has known have passed through the same experience. Christ, Buddha and Mahomet especially have this one fundamental fact in common, this one point of unity and identity amid many diversities. As Frater Perdurabo has said:

- ~ "Buddha was born a prince, and died a beggar.
- ~ "Mohammed was born a beggar, and died a prince.
- ~ "Christ remained obscure until many years after his death."
- ~ Elaborate lives of each have been written by devotees, and there is one thing common to all three, an *omission*. We hear nothing of Christ between the ages of twelve and thirty. Mahomet disappeared into a cave. Buddha left his palace, and went for a long while into the desert. Each of them, perfectly silent up to the time

LOAVES AND FISHES

of the disappearance, came back and immediately began to preach new laws. . . . Making every possible deduction for fable and myth, we get this one 'coincidence': *A nobody goes away, and comes back a somebody.* This is not to be explained in any of the ordinary ways.

It must be supposed that some great inner illumination transformed the lives of all these men, call it by whatever name we may: Cosmic Consciousness, Ecstasy, Samadhi, Initiation, The Inner Light, Bliss, Transport, Rapture, etc. No longer had they to *believe* (to accept the words and the opinions of others); they *knew* (from inner, personal experience) whereof they spoke. They had 'attained.' They were possessed of knowledge of the Inner Law, and were filled with true psychic power. Physically and mentally, they could now perform wonders. They were no longer normal men, since they had become super-men, by the attainment of supernormal faculties—true psychic wisdom. They had knowledge of these laws, and their teachings were based upon them. This it was which particularly struck those who came into direct, personal contact with Jesus: He spoke, 'not as the Scribes, but as one having authority.' (Matt. 7:29). He did so because He had attained that superior level of spiritual consciousness from which His teachings emanated, and which He imparted to the world of men living in a lower dimension of consciousness. In this sense, then, His teachings were Divine . . . and upon them Christianity was founded.

IV

ANALOGIES OF HIS LIFE WITH THE LIVES OF OTHER "MESSIAHS"

NEARLY all the religions of the world contain prophecies of the coming of a Divine Savior.

There have been many great spiritual teachers: Jesus, Krishna, Buddha, Confucius, Lao Tzu, Mahomet, Zoroaster, Attis, Osiris, Quetzalcoatl, Bacab, Mithra, and a host of others. All these teachers have had millions of followers, extending in an unbroken chain through many centuries. Reputed incidents in the lives of many of them show an extraordinary similarity. Broad-minded Christians have gradually come to realize that the life and teachings of Jesus, though beautiful, are not unique, and find parallels in the lives and teachings of other great spiritual leaders. In these days of free enlightenment, it would be foolish to blind our eyes to the fact that much in the life of Christ is symbolical, and that embellishments and errors have crept into the original primitive narratives. This the 'higher criticism' has proved beyond doubt. Further, interesting parallels have been shown to exist between the life of Christ and other spiritual teachers, in other countries, and in all other ages of the world's history. A brief summary of these will doubtless prove of interest, as showing the similarity of spiritual *milieu* in which these men found themselves when they began their teachings.

LOAVES AND FISHES

Many texts have been pointed to in the Old Testament as prophetic of the coming of Christ, but it is now contended by many scholars that no passage in the Hebrew Scriptures actually refers to Jesus of Nazareth. Naturally the Jews, in common with other nations, cherished strong anticipations of the arrival of some Mighty Deliverer, who would restore the power and glory of the nation, and raise Israel to a point of worldly dominance.

Such Messianic prophecies are to be found in the sacred writings of all nations. In India, China, Persia, Egypt, these ancient predictions may be found, some of them being very precise. Faber, in his *Origins of Pagan Idolatry* (II, p. 97), says that Zeradustht "in the latter days, declared that a pure virgin would conceive; that as soon as the child was born a star would appear, blazing even at noonday with undiminished lustre." Child, in his *Progress of Religious Ideas*, p. 211, speaking of Chinese prophecies, quotes the following:

"The Holy One will unite in himself all the virtues of Heaven and earth. By his justice the world will be re-established in the ways of righteousness. He will labor and suffer much. He must pass the Great Torrent, whose waves shall enter into his soul; but he alone can offer-up to the Lord sacrifice worthy of himself."

Angelic visitors were said to have attended the birth of Christ. Similar accounts are to be found in connection with the birth of Buddha, Krishna, Confucius and others.

LOAVES AND FISHES

Miraculous births are among the most ancient of religious traditions. The virgin birth of Christ is paralleled by similar accounts of the virgin birth of Krishna, Gautama, Horus, Osiris, Tammuz, Mithra, Zoroaster, Quetzalcoatl, Bacab, Freyr, Attis, Yu, and other semi-divine persons.

Many of these are said to have been visited by Magi and prophets in their infancy or childhood. Several of them were delivered from destruction in infancy. Many of them showed great mental brilliance in childhood or even as babes.

A number of the world's Saviors are said to have been crucified. Wittoba, Indra, Quetzalcoatl were among these. As the Reverend C. H. Vail says, in his *World's Saviors*:

"The resemblance between the death and resurrection of Jesus and that of the pre-Christian Saviors is most remarkable. Nearly all descended into the grave, and some into the infernal regions; the period between the death and resurrection was for most of them three days, as a rule, at or about the vernal equinox. . . ."

Many students of comparative religions see in these similarities evidences of Solar myths, sex symbolisms and above all the deeper racial workings of the human mind. Doubtless all these have played their part in the origin and growth of religious ideas. That certain passages of the New Testament are not to be taken literally goes without saying, especially visionary material such as that in Revelations. Doubtless much is to be interpreted symbolically. All this, however, does not refute the fundamental, historic validity of the Gospel

LOAVES AND FISHES

narratives, insofar as they attempt to depict the essentials of the life and teachings of Christ. That the Gospels differ from one another in certain particulars is common knowledge, just as historians differ from one another today. Further, it must be remembered that these are not contemporary documents, some of them being much later than others. This is not the place to discuss the relative historicity of the Gospel narratives, however; such criticism has been undertaken in detail by students far more competent than I. When all has been said, the fact remains, as I see it, that the original authors of the accounts now contained in the Gospels wrote what they thought to be facts, with reverence and with the utmost devotion to historic truth. That certain interpolations and errors of translation were made by later writers was not their fault. They set down the details of the life and teachings of Jesus Christ with what they felt to be a faithful regard to absolute accuracy. Hence they represent the essentials of His life as known to them; and as such semi-historic documents we must treat them.

For purposes of comparison, however, it will be of interest to give here a brief summary of similar psychic events in the lives of the leading religious mentors of the world, though this must necessarily be brief. Considerable difficulty must be experienced in making a selection from among the host of names which at once present themselves; my choice has been somewhat arbitrary, and there are bound to be certain omissions. This being understood, I venture to present brief comparisons between incidents in the lives of these spiritual

LOAVES AND FISHES

teachers and those in the life of Christ. The following may, I think, be considered the outstanding messiahs (as founders of new religions, and not merely subdivisions of older faiths) and as examples of those who have profoundly affected human thought: Zoroaster, Krishna, Buddha, Confucius, Lao Tzu, Quetzalcoatl, and Mahomet.*

✓ *Zoroaster* is said to have spent most of his life as a hermit; he wandered in the desert and spent his days

* There have been many others, and it would be hard indeed to know where, precisely, to draw the line. A multitude of names of such teachers and reformers spring to mind, calling for mention: Calvin (the founder of Presbyterianism), and Wesley (the founder of Methodism). Martin Luther, John Knox, John Huss, Erasmus, Bruno, Zwinger, Wycliffe, Savonarola. Mother Ann (the founder of the Shakers), and Loyola (the founder of the Jesuits), George Fox (the founder of the Quakers), and Alexander Campbell (the founder of the Baptists). Joseph Smith and Brigham Young (the founders of Mormonism). Swedenborg, Mary Baker Eddy, H. P. Blavatsky, Andrew Jackson Davis, and many others.

Should not Moses, Pythagoras, Plato, and Socrates be included? And what of the early Church Fathers, the Saints and the Mystics, such as St. Theresa, Boehme, St. John of the Cross, etc.? What of some of the ancient semi-divine personages? It is evident that the list is inexhaustible, and that some line of demarkation must be drawn.

Among the great religious philosophers of China we find, in addition to Confucius and Lao Tzu: Mencius, Hsun Tzu, Yang, Hsiung, Mo Ti, Chu, Chuang, Tzu, Hui Tzu, Han Yu, etc.

In India, mention should be made of: Kapila (*circ.* 700 B.C.), the formulator of the *Sankhya* system; Ramanuga and Sankaracharya, founders of sub-schools of *Vedanta*; Patanjali, formulator of *Yoga* practices; Kanada, founder of the *Vaisheshika* system; Gotama, founder of the *Nyaya* system; Jaimini, founder of the *Purva Mimansa* system; Sanjaya, who founded a school of Agnosticism; Ajita, who founded a materialistic school; Kassasapa, who founded an iconoclastic school of thought; Makkhali, who established a school of Determinism; Rama, the hero of the *Ramayana*; Nanak, the sub-deity of the Sikhs; and many 'lesser lights,' who formulated new philosophies or religions, or headed sub-divisions of the old.

One of the earliest exponents of *Sufism* was Rabia, of Basra, a woman, one of the few who have figured in the development of philosophical and religious thought.

LOAVES AND FISHES

meditating upon the mountain-top, as did Christ and Moses. Like Mahomet and many others, he asserted that he had talked with God and the archangels, receiving from them inspiration and instruction.

Krishna, according to the *Vishnu-Purana*, was the son of a king; he was born of a virgin, saved from slaughter as an infant, brought up by a cowherd and performed 'miracles' in his childhood as well as in later years. According to popular tradition, he was born in a cave, and also spent much of his life in meditation. There are thus many interesting analogies between his life and the recorded life of Christ. He is still the subject of adoration throughout Northern India.

'*Buddha* was reared in luxury. After the 'great renunciation,' however, he fled to the jungle and became an ascetic, where he fasted and practised mortification before concluding that these were the wrong methods of Attainment. Beginning a life of meditation, he is said to have sat for three days and three nights under the famous Bo Tree, without moving, 'ere Illumination came to him. Miraculous events were said to have attended the birth of *Buddha*, just as they were said to have coincided with the birth of Christ. Like Christ also, he retired into the Wilderness, there to seek interior spiritual Illumination; and, like Christ, he came forth into the world to teach 'as one having authority.' Both enunciated a code of morals and ethics; both performed wonders; both have counted their followers among the millions. And both have been considered, by their respective devotees, 'the Light of the World.'

Confucius was born about 550 B.C., during the Chow

LOAVES AND FISHES

dynasty. His mother is said to have had several prophetic dreams before his birth, in which she foresaw that her son would become a 'crownless king,' and that he would be born in a cave, as indeed he was. Very early in life, Confucius became interested in philosophy, and in his early twenties began to gain renown for his sagacity and wisdom. His last words were: 'My time is come to die.' He fell into a deep lethargy, and so gradually sank into death in the year 479 B.C.

Lao Tzu, unlike Confucius, lived a sheltered life, spent largely in meditation, like the modern Llamas. Hence relatively little is known concerning him. Like Christ, Lao Tzu was said to have been born of a virgin mother. Other legends state that he was born under a plum tree, the symbol of immortality and that he was conceived under the influence of a 'falling star.'

Quetzalcoatl, the deity of Mexico and Central America, was a saintly ruler and civilizer, and many of the reported incidents in his life resemble those in the lives of other great teachers. He was said to have been white, of noble features, with long, dark hair, a full beard, and dressed in flowing robes. He finally departed for some unknown destination, from which place, legend has it, he sent back certain of his followers to tell the Cholulans that, in a future age, white, bearded men like himself would land from the sea, 'where the sun rises,' and rule the country.

Mahomet was born about 570 A.D., and died on the 7th of June, 632 A.D. From a poor camel driver he became a prince, dominating a vast empire and ruling the lives of millions of followers. Mahomet claimed to

LOAVES AND FISHES

have received most of his instruction directly, by means of a series of revelations. Before receiving them, however, Mahomet retired into the wilderness, and then into a cave. His first 'communications' were written, but these were later abandoned for oral discourses, delivered when he was in trance, and taken down by his early disciples. The trance state was accompanied by profuse perspiration, which the Prophet induced by wrapping himself in a blanket. Mahomet asserted that most of his inspirational material was either seen by him in a series of visions, or heard, as we should say, 'clairaudiently.' His earlier, mystical life was later destined to be swamped with practical and worldly affairs, and he is one of the few great spiritual leaders who was at the same time a reformer, a statesman, a soldier and a politician. Certain mythical stories are current, as to miraculous events connected both with the birth and death of Mahomet. It is hardly necessary to say that these have been indignantly rejected by Christian theologians!

The 'revelations' which came to Mahomet were associated with an inrush of Cosmic Consciousness, and an inner, blinding light. This had been experienced by many of the world's great teachers; with Paul it came as a sudden, searing flash. In the case of Mahomet the experience is said to have befallen him in the solitude of a cave on Mount Hera, about three leagues from Mecca, where he was lost in meditation:

"As in the night he lay wrapped in his mantle he heard a voice calling, and when he uncovered his head, a flood of unearthly light broke upon him so intolerable

LOAVES AND FISHES

that he swooned away. It was an illumination of the understanding also, and he beheld the decrees of God."

The similarity of this experience to others of like nature need hardly be emphasized.

And, if there are these similarities in the *lives* of the great spiritual teachers of the world, so too may be found many striking analogies in their basic *teachings*. It is true that there are many points of divergence, but these are more than compensated by the resemblances.

Zoroaster, for example (*circ.* 1000 B.C.), whose religious philosophy is embodied in the *Avesta*, taught that there are two great spiritual forces in the Universe: Ormazd, infinitely good and beneficent; Ahri-man, evil and destructive. These correspond closely to the later conceptions of God and Satan, respectively. Ahriman was said to have been cast into Hell, after an altercation with Ormazd. Thence he constantly tempts and lures humanity with lies and all manner of deceit, while Ormazd inspires to goodness, purity and the spiritual life.

The original, pure Zoroastrian teachings were later corrupted by the priesthood. The founder contemplated a church without pomp and ceremony, in which the holy fire on the altar was the essential symbol. From this developed the fire-temples, in which sacrifices were offered, ceremonial services were held, and high and low masses conducted. Penances were imposed and ceremonies performed. It is said that every young believer in Mazda was 'girt with holy lace' and had to choose a confessor or spiritual guide. The bearing of all this upon later Christian ceremonials is evident, and

LOAVES AND FISHES

it is remarkable that the outgrowth of the latter from the former has not been emphasized more fully in the past.*

In Zoroastrianism, immortality is definitely taught: Heaven, Hell and an intermediate state, Purgatory, in which reside until the 'trump of doom,' those whose good and bad deeds so nearly balance each other that decision as to their ultimate fate is postponed until the judging deities have 'more leisure' in which to make the necessary decision! Every man, at death, is metaphorically 'weighed in the balance,' and judged according to his acts, just as he is said to be in the Egyptian *Book of the Dead*.

It is stated in the *Encyclopædia Britannica* that, 'For the great mass of the people Zoroaster's doctrine was too abstract and spiritualistic.' The extent to which so-called 'communication with angels' was emphasized in his teachings may be judged from this reference. His emphasis upon inspirational teaching is maintained throughout the *Avesta*. It is hardly necessary to point out the fact that fire, held sacred by his followers, is regarded merely as a *symbol*, just as images and crucifixes are regarded as symbols in the Christian church.

Buddhism is of course typical and representative of Oriental thought, emphasizing a form of spiritual monism, karma, reincarnation, and other factors for-

* Since writing the above, I have come across the following sentence in *The Future Life* (Anon., London, 1933, p. 55) :

"It is likely that later Jewish theology, and so early Christian thought, were influenced by Zoroastrian ideas, at any rate indirectly."

LOAVES AND FISHES

eign to the West. Yet the underlying ethical and moral teachings enunciated are strikingly similar.

Confucianism is more strictly an ethical-culture system than a religion, in the strict sense of the word. Yet compare many of the reputed sayings of Confucius with the words of Christ, as narrated in the Gospels. It is reported that on one occasion Confucius was asked:

"Is there any one word which may serve as a rule of practice for daily life?"

"Is not 'reciprocity' such a word?" he answered. "What you would not have done to yourself do not to others." (The 'Do unto others' of Christ.)

Lao Tzu, again, is reported to have said:

"Requite evil with kindness"; "Mighty is he who conquers himself"; "He who has his foundation in the Law is like a little child"; "He who is wise puts his own person last, yet it is found in the foremost place." ('He that loseth his life shall find it,' etc.). It should be remembered that these great Chinese teachers both lived about 600 B.C., being contemporaries of Buddha.

Quetzalcoatl, again, taught an austere and virtuous life; the hatred of all violence and wars; the abolishment of human and animal sacrifices, and the offering of flowers, fruit, etc., in their place. Penances for misdeeds were prescribed; among these was the drawing of blood from their own bodies by means of thorns.

Mahomet placed special emphasis upon the Unity of God and immortality. He claimed that his revelation confirmed both the Jewish and Christian Scriptures. He believed himself to be 'the mouthpiece of God,' and

LOAVES AND FISHES

in many respects his doctrinal teachings coincide with those of Christianity, as we should expect, since they originated from approximately the same geographical area, and were founded some six hundred years after the death of Christ.

This brief summary indicates the interesting parallels which exist, and the analogies between the teachings and the incidents narrated and said to have occurred in the life of Christ, on the one hand, and those in the lives of other great spiritual teachers. Many of these are most striking, and when we make similar comparisons between these older happenings and the phenomena noted in our own day, these resemblances become all the more remarkable. This fact will, however, be increasingly evident when we come to consider such manifestations in greater detail. This I propose to do in the chapters which follow.

V

THE PROBLEM OF CHRIST'S 'MIRACLES'

THE number of the 'miracles,' reported in the New Testament, amount to about thirty-five in all, not more than twenty being found in any one Gospel. Of these, eleven are found in Matthew, Mark and Luke; four in Matthew and Mark; two in Matthew and Luke; one in Mark and Luke, while the remainder occur in one Gospel only. These may therefore be listed as follows:

In Matthew, Mark and Luke:

The healing of the leper—Matt. 8:2-4; Mark 1:40-45; Luke 5:12-16.

The healing of Peter's mother-in-law—Matt. 8:14-15; Mark 1:29-31; Luke 4:38-39.

The healing of the paralytic—Matt. 9:2-8; Mark 2:1-12; Luke 5:18-26.

The healing of the withered hand—Matt. 12:9-14; Mark 3:1-6; Luke 6:6-11.

The stilling of the tempest—Matt. 8:18-27; Mark 4:35-41; Luke 8:22-25.

The demoniac of Gadara—Matt. 8:28-34; Mark 5:1-20; Luke 8:26-39.

The woman with an issue of blood—Matt. 9:20-22; Mark 5:25-34; Luke 8:43-48.

The raising of Jairus' daughter—Matt. 9:18-19, 23-26; Mark 5:22-24; 35-43; Luke 8:41-42, 49-56.

LOAVES AND FISHES

The feeding of the five thousand—Matt. 14:15-21;
Mark 6:35-44; Luke 9:12-17.

The healing of the lunatic boy—Matt. 17:14-21; Mark
9:14-29; Luke 9:37-43.

The healing of the blind man at Jericho—Matt. 20:
29-34; Mark 10:46-52; Luke 18:35-43.

In Matthew and Mark:

Jesus walking on the sea—Matt. 14:22-33; Mark 6:
45-52 (see also John 6:14-21).

The healing of the Canaanite woman's daughter—
Matt. 15:21-28; Mark 7:24-30.

The feeding of the four thousand—Matt. 15:32-39;
Mark 8:1-9.

The cursing of the fig-tree—Matt. 21:17-22; Mark 11:
12-14; 20-24.

In Matthew and Luke:

The healing of the Centurion's servant—Matt. 8:5-13;
Luke 7:1-10.

The healing of the dumb demoniac—Matt. 9:32-33;
Luke 11:14.

In Mark and Luke:

The healing of a demoniac in Capernaum synagogue—
Mark 1:23-26; Luke 4:33-36.

In Matthew only:

The healing of two blind men—9:27-31.

The healing of a demoniac—12:22.

The finding of the stater—17:24-27.

LOAVES AND FISHES

In Mark only:

The healing of one deaf and dumb—7:31-37.

The opening of the eyes of one blind at Bethsaida—8:22-26.

In Luke only:

The miraculous draught of fishes—5:1-11.

The raising of the widow's son—7:11-17.

The cure of the woman with the spirit of infirmity—13:10-17.

The cure of the dropsied man—14:1-6.

The cleansing of the ten lepers—17:12-19.

The healing of Malchus' ear—22:49-51.

In John only:

The change of water into wine—2:1-11.

The healing of the nobleman's son—4:46-54.

The healing of the impotent man at Bethesda—5:1-16.

The opening of the eyes of one born blind—Chapter 9.

The raising of Lazarus—11:1-54.

The second miraculous draught of fishes—21:1-23.

These miracles may be grouped or sub-divided in a variety of different ways. Perhaps that chosen by Westcott, in his *Characteristics of the Gospel Miracles*, is one of the simplest. He there points out that they may be divided roughly into three groups: those wrought on *Nature*, those wrought on the *body of man*, and those wrought on his *spirit*, or on the *spirit world*. These last consist for the most part of the healing of

LOAVES AND FISHES

demoniacs, and it will therefore be seen that the second and third categories inevitably tend to inter-blend, as we should expect them to. They both fall under the general heading of *healing*. The so-called Nature-miracles, of course, stand in a class by themselves.

The average orthodox Churchman is, I believe, inclined to think that the New Testament is simply filled with cases of raising the dead, the cure of lepers and the healing of the blind, and would be astonished to realize how few these instances really are, when tabulated. A careful listing of these brings to light the following interesting data:

Cures of lepers.....	2	cases
Cures of blind and dumb.....	5	" "
Miscellaneous healing	10	" "
Demoniacs	6	" "
Raising the dead.....	3	" "
Stilling the tempest.....	1	" "
Feeding the multitude.....	2	" "
Draught of fishes	2	" "
Walking on the sea.....	1	" "
Finding of the stater.....	1	" "
Water to wine.....	1	" "
Cursing the fig-tree.....	1	" "

These cases represent the thirty-five traditional and generally accepted miracles. It will be seen that twenty-six of them relate to healing in one form or another, while nine of them are miscellaneous Nature-miracles. Numerically, they stand in the relation of approximately three to one. The healing miracles are thus by far the most frequent, and will be considered in detail

LOAVES AND FISHES

in later chapters. The remaining miracles will be considered more briefly in Chapter IX.

Before coming to them it should be pointed out that, in addition to the traditional miracles just referred to, a number of instances of extraordinary and seemingly miraculous phenomena occurred in Jesus' life: cases wherein He read the thoughts of those about Him, knew what was happening at considerable distances, foretold events which actually transpired, delivered lofty inspirational utterances, etc. It is indeed singular that these instances should have been referred to so seldom by commentators, and particularly by theologians; yet they are of very great interest and are, again, paralleled by similar psychic manifestations in our own day, a fact which, one might think, would tend to emphasize their genuineness. Inasmuch as so little has been said about these cases, in the past, a special chapter will be devoted to them in the present book.

Coming now to the special Nature-miracles, we shall consider these briefly each in turn. They are of an entirely different order from the above, and also differ from one another radically.

Before doing so, however, a few words may not be out of place on the general subject of miracles *as such*, irrespective of the particular types of miracles recorded. These suggestions are of course intended to be merely tentative, theoretical and preliminary. They may, however, serve as a useful starting-point for further discussion.

It is hardly necessary to emphasize the fact that alleged 'miracles' have occurred in all ages of the

LOAVES AND FISHES

world's history, and in every country, civilized and uncivilized, of which we have any records. In a certain sense, this is true today, for seemingly supernormal happenings are constantly being reported from modern drawing-rooms in London, Paris, and New York just as they occur in Iceland, China, Central Africa, and the South Sea Islands. They have been observed by men of science, just as they were observed in ancient Egypt, Greece, and Babylon. The range they cover is extensive, and it would seem incredible that there should be no common substratum of fact for this multiplicity of alleged occurrences, separated from one another by hundreds, and sometimes by thousands of years, and by similarly vast stretches of miles. The impression left upon the mind, therefore, when one reviews the evidence impartially, is that 'where there is so much smoke there must be some fire,' and that it seems highly probable *à priori* that such supernormal events *must* have occurred, more or less as reported, just as they are alleged to occur today.

The attitude of modern science and of common sense is, on the other hand, opposed to the reality of such miraculous happenings. Daily experience and common sense tell us that foul diseases do not vanish at a mere word of command, that blindness is not restored by the application of clay and spittle, and that men do not, as a rule, walk upon water or read the unspoken thoughts of another. Science bases its objection upon the 'constancy of Nature,' and the impossibility of breaking her immutable Laws. Hence the 'impossibility' of such occurrences. In principle, this attitude is not only valid

LOAVES AND FISHES

but valuable, inasmuch as it has rendered the unbroken progress of science possible. Only by adhering to it can we hope to dispose of the mass of illusion, superstition and ignorance which clouded the mind of primitive man.

Hume's essay *On Miracles*, the writings of Francis Bacon, and the general development of scientific thought, gave a great impetus to the current scepticism, which was strongly reinforced by the later discrediting of witchcraft. Rationalism began to take root, furthered by the critical writings of Voltaire, Thomas Paine, Hume and the French Encyclopædists. Psychology began to be studied as a science, together with certain abnormal conditions of the mind, especially insanity, which for so many centuries had been popularly considered a form of demoniac possession. Anatomy, physiology, and biology came to be freely studied, and men began for the first time to have some faint inkling as to the nature and constitution of the world in which he dwelt. This was further emphasized by the discoveries in astronomy, which showed that the primitive views of man as to his position in the Universe were obviously based upon simple myths. Mechanistic science took firm hold upon the minds and imaginations of thinking men, and this attitude seemed to be further justified and reinforced by every new discovery. Finally, in the middle of the last century, Darwin enunciated his doctrine of evolution; and thenceforward until the beginning of the present century the wave of materialism undoubtedly surged higher and higher, culminating in the writings of

LOAVES AND FISHES

Büchner (*Force and Matter*) and Haeckel (*The Riddle of the Universe*, etc.), which virtually raised materialistic monism to the position of a religion.

During the last decade, it is true, there has been a distinct swing in the opposite direction; many eminent scientific men have repudiated these views. But the fact remains that a mechanistic philosophy still dominates the Western world, and particularly our institutions of learning. In consequence, this is the attitude of the typical man-in-the-street.

The position of dogmatic science is merely that the laws of Nature are immutable and unchangeable, and hence that anything in the form of a miracle is 'impossible.' This was naturally in direct opposition to the position of the dogmatic theologian, who usually defined a miracle as an event contrary to the laws of Nature, or in opposition to them, by reason of the intervention of the Divine Will. Hence the 'warfare between science and religion.' Viewed in this light, it is certain that such things as miracles do not occur, and never have occurred. Fundamental laws of nature were not set aside in order that the Children of Israel might cross the Red Sea, or that a palsied man might be healed; the sun did not stand still on Gibeon.

But, because this is so, does it indicate that certain seemingly miraculous events have never occurred? By no means. It would be folly to assert that we even yet understand one-tenth part of the possibilities and laws of nature. Every day this fact is being more and more brought home to us by recent discoveries in biology, physics, astronomy. The open-minded scientist admits

LOAVES AND FISHES

this. Such being the case, it is quite possible that seemingly miraculous events might happen, which in truth are in accordance with the order of Nature, but a *larger* order of Nature than that envisioned by present-day science. Many psychic and supernormal phenomena fall into this category. And it is my belief that at least the majority of the Biblical miracles may be placed in this category also.

If there is one law which may be thought to be established beyond all others, that is assuredly the law of cause and effect. This is said to be demonstrated by the causal sequence of events in the physical world and by the principle of determinism in the mental world. For the ordinary run of events in our everyday experience, the 'causes' (*pace Hume!*) of any given event may usually be perceived or at least understood. When any unusual event occurs, we seek to ascertain the causes, which may or may not be discoverable. In certain psychic phenomena they are *not* accepted by present-day science, if by 'cause' we mean some 'natural' cause. In such a case some new cause must be sought. And frequently this is discovered! This fact has assuredly been brought home to us over and over again by recent researches in psychics.

If we could show, therefore, that there was introduced some new causal factor, 'natural' in its ultimate analysis, but unknown to present-day science, this would enable us to explain the unusual event in question, and render it intelligible to us. The supernormal or 'miraculous' event would then become, in a sense, explicable, and would be shown to belong to some

LOAVES AND FISHES

larger order of Nature, the realities of which we were only beginning to glimpse.

The point here made may perhaps be illustrated by a short parable. The story goes that, about a hundred and fifty years ago, two French *savants* were discussing the question of 'miracles.' One of them was contending that no one, in that enlightened age, believed in them any longer, that such superstitions had been exploded, etc. To which the second replied—"Well now, let us consider this question! Just what would *you* consider a miracle?"

The second *savant* thought a moment, and finally answered: "If a large, black stone were to fall out of the sky, here in the fields of sunny France, I should consider *that* a miracle. There are no black stones in the sky; consequently none can fall out of it! Yes, I should consider that a miracle!"

Now, it so happened that the very next year not one, but many black stones fell out of the sky. There was a shower of meteors, in the reality of which, as we know, scientific men at that time did not believe. Was this considered miraculous? By no means! It was merely considered an unusual natural phenomenon, and the purview of science was extended so as to include these new facts. The miraculous had become the natural, though, to be sure, the unusual and the extraordinary.

It is a mere platitude to say that the same sort of thing has occurred in our own day. Fifty years ago, the man who asserted that a casual remark uttered in London could be heard by thousands in New York, or that it was possible to see through solid objects, would

LOAVES AND FISHES

probably have been considered a fit inmate for an asylum. Yet Radio and X-rays are now accepted as a matter of course. Who can tell what wonderful new discoveries lie just ahead of us, or what will be known about our Universe a thousand or five thousand years from now? Is it conceivable that the mushroom-growth of science has yet exhausted all the possibilities of Nature, enabling us to assert dogmatically what is 'possible' and what is not? It would be absurd to suppose so. Supernormal phenomena, for the reality of which there is remarkably good evidence, are constantly being reported in our own day; the ostrich-philosophy of modern science, in refusing to accept them, does not in the least dispose of them as factual occurrences. 'Miraculous' events, in the broadest sense, are constantly happening in our very midst did we but deign to investigate and verify them.

My contention, therefore, is that 'miracles' of certain types may conceivably have happened; that there is a certain factual basis for the cases reported in both the Old and the New Testaments; but that these cases represent events neither contrary to the laws of Nature nor opposed to them. They are representative of some higher forces and causes, of which men were naturally ignorant at the time of their occurrence, and which modern science does not even yet understand in their totality. Let us see if some new light may not be shed upon these cases by an impartial study of analogous phenomena occurring in our own day. These are, of course, represented by psychotherapy, on the one hand, and by psychic phenomena, on the other.

VI

PSYCHIC PHENOMENA—THE KEY TO THESE ENIGMAS

THERE are various ways of viewing the 'miracles' which have been attributed to Christ in the Gospel narratives. One of these is the ultra-rationalistic: they are all the result of fraud and deception, mainly on the part of the compilers of the New Testament records, or are the result of illusion, error and superstition, in a relatively primitive and unenlightened age; that the accounts are either borrowed or concocted, and a series of incredible 'miracles' attributed to Christ in order to bolster-up the waning but tyrannical power of the Church. This extreme view can hardly be given serious consideration by any careful student of the records themselves and the accessible documentary evidence.

A second view is that expressed by traditional orthodox theology; all Christ's miracles are genuine, and are evidences of His divine power. They represent unique events, in which the laws of Nature are subverted and contravened. This attitude, of course, leaves no loopholes for 'explanations' of any kind, and any attempts to draw analogies between the New Testament 'miracles' and similar psychic phenomena would be quite useless, even profane. I am compelled to pass over this view also, for obvious reasons, the chief of which is

LOAVES AND FISHES

that I believe it to be essentially untrue; it merely emphasizes the hopeless divergence existing between these views and those of modern science.

A third view is that at least the majority of the Gospel accounts are true, in the sense that they attempt to convey the essential facts, as witnessed or reported at or about the time of Christ, or shortly after His death. The 'miracles' themselves would thus represent genuine supernormal (psychic) phenomena: healings, visions, warnings, perception of the thoughts of others, etc. These could not be accounted for by any ordinary naturalistic theories, and hence were to that extent 'miraculous.' But they were not *unique*, inasmuch as they have been paralleled by similar manifestations in all times and in our own day; nor do they contravene the established laws of Nature in the sense generally understood. (They occur in accordance with higher, psychic laws, the reality of which we are only now beginning to understand.) It is perhaps hardly necessary for me to say that this is my own opinion, and the attitude which I assume in the present book. Viewed in this light, their authenticity is re-established, the truthfulness of the Gospel narratives vindicated, new light is thrown upon the life of Jesus, and the luster of His name enhanced. It also opens before us a fascinating new field for comparative study and research.

Supernormal phenomena, as studied today by psychical researchers, are those which have not as yet been accepted into the fold of any of the official sciences. Telepathy, clairvoyance, premonitions, apparitions,

LOAVES AND FISHES

trance-communications, and various mediumistic phenomena are examples of these. We psychic investigators do not believe that any of them are supernatural, in the sense that they are 'contrary to the laws of Nature,' for if they actually occur they must be natural in some sense, for otherwise they could not happen! They may, however, represent occurrences not explicable by science as it is understood today.⁷ They are unusual, extraordinary, and in that sense supernormal. Such phenomena we believe to exist, and their reality we believe we have proved. This being the case, interesting analogies at once present themselves, between the older and the newer 'miracles.' In the light of these, the majority of the historic narratives at once assume an air of plausibility, and become intelligible and explicable to a certain extent.

(There are two main classes or categories of psychic phenomena: the physical and the mental.¹ The latter are purely psychic or psychological; the former affect the material world in which we dwell. Naturally, this is no place to attempt any extended defense of the reality of such manifestations, which I propose to explain in the briefest possible summary. We may well begin with the physical phenomena, and subsequently consider the mental.

For our present purposes, I must rest content with saying that, in the opinion of many eminent men of science, such supernormal physical phenomena undoubtedly exist, and that they are now being studied in a number of properly equipped laboratories, by means of instruments of precision. Telekinesis, or the movement of

LOAVES AND FISHES

objects without physical contact, is one of the best established of these phenomena, this having been checked by means of delicate registering apparatus, by inducing infra-red rays, etc. 'Psychic lights' have been seen and photographed, and 'cold breezes,' so frequently said to accompany 'ghostly' phenomena, have been objectively proved to exist by means of self-recording thermometers, which showed that, coincidental with the production of physical phenomena, a definite fall of several degrees was noted instantaneously. Many of these odd phenomena have been subjected to precise laboratory investigation.

Passing from general references to specific cases and details, the following may be of interest to those who wish to ascertain what available evidence exists for special instances, such as those mentioned above.

Regarding the 'walking on the water' miracle, Doctor Nandor Fodor has an article upon this subject in *Light*, July 20, 1934, in which he discusses the question, and cites various older cases. He says in part:

"Jesus walking on the water is one of the Bible miracles for which we have some parallels in modern psychic experience. *Light*, October 29, 1892, recorded a case from Russian Poland. A medium in trance walked on the surface of a pond, and, about the middle, sank to reappear again with a skull in her hand. Another instance was told by Baron Heinrich Droste in the *Zeitschrift für Parapsychologie*, 1930, p. 266. An old fisherman, at the Baron's request, stepped out of the boat in which they were fishing, and walked about ten meters on the water towards the land. It looked as if

LOAVES AND FISHES

his feet glided over the surface of the water. His shoes showed no wetting.

"Cases are reported from the East. . . . Tautriedelta saw Jacob of Simla walk across a pond and back (*Borderland*, Vol. III, p. 148). Between our age and Biblical times the feat has been recorded in so many instances that little doubt can be entertained as to an underlying basis of fact. Du Prel in his *Philosophy of Mysticism* and César de Vesme in *Histoire Experimentale du Spiritisme* give excellent summaries. . . ."

Various other cases and experiences have since been reported in the same magazine. There are many well-evidenced cases of supernormal loss of weight, which have been tested by means of weighing scales, and also of complete 'levitations' of the human body, reported by French and Italian scientists, when working in their own laboratories.

The lifting or levitation of the human body is one of the most incredible of all psychic phenomena, one would think, and yet a tremendous mass of evidence exists in its favor; much of this evidence is quite recent, when observations were made under good conditions of control. Such phenomena are said to occur frequently in the Orient, but numerous well-attested instances have been reported by scientific men; some of these are mentioned by Professor Charles Richet, in his *Thirty Years of Psychical Research* (pp. 546-51). I shall have occasion to speak of this more fully in another place.

The ability to find underground water, by means of the Divining Rod, was for long thought to be pure

LOAVES AND FISHES

superstition; but when Sir William Barrett (Professor of Physics, Dublin University), investigated it at first-hand, he was forced to the conclusion that such an ability actually existed and that many titled persons, clergymen, scientists, and others, were found to possess this ability, in addition to professional 'dowsers.' It is a matter of record that Sapper Kelly located more than thirty wells for the British army, during the War, in Gallipoli. The reader is referred to Sir William Barrett's voluminous reports on the subject, in the *Proceedings* of the S. P. R. (XIII and XV, etc.) as well as to his book upon the same subject, for verification.

Immunity to fire is another extraordinary phenomenon of which we have many accounts. Among primitive peoples, the 'fire-walking' ceremony has been repeatedly observed; impartial observations made on the spot have revealed the fact that the soles of the feet of those undergoing the ceremony show no traces of having been burned, nor (curiously enough) were their garments scorched though the fire was shown to emit great heat, even melting the lead on a thermometer held some distance over it. These fire-walking ceremonies have been, so to say, duplicated by several modern mediums, D. D. Home being a case in point. Home was observed, on many occasions, to go to the fire-place and from it remove a red-hot coal, which he held between his hands while he blew on it till the flames licked up between his fingers. Sceptics were asked to touch the coal, and a severely blistered finger was the result. Yet, curiously enough, Home seemed to

LOAVES AND FISHES

possess the ability to transfer his power to others, on occasion, merely by placing his hand upon them. When he did so the person so touched could handle the red-hot coal with impunity. This transference of psychic power is a very interesting phenomenon, and I have seen instances of it myself on several occasions, I being the subject to whom the power was transferred.

The following extract is from the official report by Sir William Crookes,* of a séance with D. D. Home, on the evening of May 9, 1871 (see *Proceedings S. P. R.*, VI, p. 103):

"Mr. Home again went to the fire, and after stirring the hot coal about with his hand, took out a red-hot piece nearly as big as an orange, and putting it on his right hand, covered it over with his left hand so as to almost completely enclose it, and then blew into the small furnace thus extemporized until the lump of charcoal was nearly white-hot, and then drew my attention to the lambent flame which was flickering over the coal and licking round his fingers; he fell on his knees, looked up in a reverent manner, held up the coal in front of him and said: 'Is not God good? Are not His laws wonderful?'"

It has been suggested, tentatively, that such immunity to fire may be due to the fact that the vital atmosphere, or 'aura,' surrounding the human body may become condensed and solidified under certain conditions, thus forming a sheath or protection for the underlying skin, a sort of 'etheric insulation.' Whether

*Inventor of the Crookes tube, which rendered the X-rays possible; discoverer of the element thallium, etc.

LOAVES AND FISHES

or no this be true we do not as yet know. Certain it is that some ecstatic or exalted state is essential before such tests can be successfully undertaken. Whenever they are attempted in the normal condition, severe burns result in consequence. But, while one can quite imagine that this exalted condition might prevent the subject from feeling any *pain*, it would by no means serve to explain the fact that the actual physiological structures of the body were not damaged or severely burned in consequence. Yet this appears to be the case. These fire-test phenomena are, on any theory, of profound interest and significance.

I have reserved for final mention perhaps the most extraordinary of all these physical manifestations: those in which the organic material of the living human body is supernormally modified or amplified beyond its normal periphery. These phenomena definitely deal with *life*, and as such they have been studied by many eminent scientific men under the name of 'supernormal biology.' In France, Germany, and Italy, especially, these occurrences have received careful attention, and have likewise been studied by laboratory methods. A vital, living substance seems to exude from the medium's body, being built-up into semblances of animate forms, partial or complete. Occasionally, these are tenuous and evanescent; sometimes, on the contrary, they appear to be solid and substantial, having all the outward appearances of life, possessing definite physiological structure. These are the so-called 'materializations,' and, incredible as they may appear, they are in my estimation undoubtedly factual; in this opinion

LOAVES AND FISHES

many noted savants would be found to concur. We are as yet far from understanding what takes place at such times, but living replicas of human bodies seem to be built-up, remaining visible and tangible for periods ranging in duration from a few seconds to several minutes. At such times these phantom-forms exhibit all the mental and physical characteristics of living bodies.

Regarding these 'materialization' phenomena, which appear so incredible to the average person, I am quite convinced from personal experience that genuine phenomena of this character do occur, notwithstanding the fact that Professor Henry Morselli, many years ago, referred to me as 'that terrible enemy of fraudulent mediums in America.' I have seen and felt such hands within my own; they melted or dissolved within my grasp as I was holding them; they were not pulled away. Many scientific men have reported the same thing. Sir William Crookes, in his *Researches in Spiritualism*, speaks of several cases within his own experience; he also reports on seeing the entranced medium and the 'form' side by side, in his own home, when he had ample opportunities of investigating the substantiality of the figure, and noting the physiological differences between the materialized form and the medium herself. In this connection he says (p. 107):

" . . . I wish to give some of the points of difference which I have observed between Miss Cook (the medium) and Katie (the materialized form). Katie's height varies; in my house I have seen her six inches taller than Miss Cook. Last night, with her bare feet and not 'tip-toeing,' she was four-and-a-half inches

LOAVES AND FISHES

taller than Miss Cook. Katie's neck was bare last night; the skin was perfectly smooth both to touch and sight, whilst on Miss Cook's neck is a large blister, which under similar conditions is distinctly visible and rough to the touch. Katie's ears are unpierced, whilst Miss Cook habitually wears earrings.* Katie's complexion is very fair, while that of Miss Cook is very dark. Katie's fingers are much longer than Miss Cook's, and her face is also larger. In manners and ways of expression there are also many decided differences. . . ."

Professor Charles Richet has published a quantity of striking evidence on this subject in his book *Thirty Years of Psychical Research*.

Let us now turn to the mental phenomena.

The reality of telepathy, or the ability of one mind to influence another at a distance otherwise than through the recognized channels of sense, is now more or less accepted and recognized, except by academic psychologists. Similarly, the reality of clairvoyance has been adequately demonstrated. These supernormal powers have been shown to exist by the painstaking experiments of the Society for Psychical Research, and by the collection of thousands of spontaneous incidents of the kind. The recent work of Doctor J. B. Rhine, of Duke University, on *Extra-Sensory Perception*, in which more than two hundred thousand experiments were tried under excellent laboratory conditions

* When Sir William wrote (1874) all earrings were of course of the type which pierced the ears, and not the modern screw-earrings.

LOAVES AND FISHES

of control, should alone prove this. He may be said to have re-demonstrated what had been demonstrated before!

If the mind of man is thus capable of manifesting itself at a distance, this fact alone should serve to knock the props from under mechanistic physiology and psychology. Their contention is that 'mind is a function of the brain,' and as such cannot function in its absence. Yet if it actually *does* function, how explain this extraordinary phenomenon? Certainly no ordinary physical theories will do so, and all analogies to Radio and similar tempting correspondences, fail utterly when analyzed in detail. Yet, if mind can be shown to be relatively free from the limiting activities of the brain, even in this life, does not this fact indicate that such independence may continue, and that the mind of man may perhaps persist in some mental world of its own, freed from the restrictions of the body? Many have thought so, and at least all *à priori* objections to such persistence would be done away with by this initial proof of the relative independence of mind and brain. With these objections removed, the way would at least be open to the possible proof of survival, through the establishment of individual 'personal identity,' by means of direct or indirect communication with such surviving entities. The belief that such communication has been established is, of course, the core of modern Spiritualism.

I have mentioned the numerous spontaneous cases which were collected by the S. P. R., indicative of the reality of telepathy. These consist, for the most part,

LOAVES AND FISHES

of apparitions coinciding with death. Some forty years ago, the Society published a voluminous Report, entitled *The Census of Hallucinations*, based on 30,000 replies to a questionnaire, and it was therein shown mathematically that the number of coincidental cases was far too great to be accounted for by mere chance. Making every possible allowance for errors, and discarding all dubious cases not well attested, the conclusion at which the Committee arrived was that "between deaths and apparitions of the dying person a connection exists which is not due to chance alone. This we hold as a proved fact." This substantiated the earlier conclusions achieved in the monumental two-volume work of Gurney, Myers, and Podmore, *Phantasms of the Living*, which had been published some eight years earlier. More than seven hundred such cases had been included in that previous volume.

Yet if this be a fact, it is again a most significant and important one, seeming to indicate that some tremendous vital activity occurs at the very moment when, according to mechanistic physiology, the mind of the dying man was being extinguished! Further, that this released mental entity is capable of influencing other minds at considerable distances, seemingly independent of time and space. These phantasmal appearances are technically called 'telepathic hallucinations,' for the reason that they seem to be externally initiated by some distant mind, while they are admittedly hallucinatory in character. We thus have a modern, scientific view of 'ghosts,' which presents the least possible strain upon accepted psychological theories.

LOAVES AND FISHES

Similarly, it has been suggested that, if such phantasmal appearances may be generated by a distant, living mind, and if that mind is (at times at least) capable of functional activity apart from the living brain, then it is quite possible that similar telepathic transfers may be initiated by these same minds *post-mortem*, engendering what have been termed 'phantasms of the dead.' On this view, spiritual entities thinking-over, or as it were dreaming-over, their past life-memories and experiences, would (perhaps unconsciously) influence the minds of persons still living, and cause them to perceive a similar 'telepathic hallucination,' which they would describe, in popular parlance, as the 'ghost' of the deceased person. Were some such theory as this true, it would enable us to account for many of the phenomena witnessed in so-called 'haunted' houses, and would at the same time serve to explain the apparent aimlessness of the majority of haunting phantasms which have been reported. The reason would be that, in the majority of such cases, the spiritual entity represented would not be *consciously* there, as it were, but merely a dream-like thought-projection of himself. As Myers expressed it, 'there is no *heart* in them.' The curious manifestations often witnessed in haunted houses might thus be explained, without undue strain upon our credulity.

While, however, this explanation might serve to account for the majority of instances such as those constantly reported, it seems doubtful if it is capable of explaining all of them. In many cases, evidence seems to exist that some semi-material form is actually present, some 'astral' or 'etheric' body. In the case reported

LOAVES AND FISHES

by the Reverend P. H. Newnham, for example, the phantom was seen both by himself and his wife, and while they were observing it, it glided across the room and placed its fingers over a night-light, which was burning on the mantelpiece; the light was actually extinguished! Now, a hallucination cannot snuff a candle. The apparent implication is, therefore, that in this and many similar instances of the kind, some objective phantasm was actually there, occupying space in some tenuous, semi-material body.

That some such 'body' exists there is considerable evidence. Hundreds of individuals have had 'out-of-the-body' experiences, either while fainting, or in trance, coma or under the influence of an anæsthetic. This 'body' seems just as real to the subject of the experience at the time as any physical body could be. Many experiments have been tried by psychic experimenters on the artificial projection of this double or spiritual counterpart. Furthermore, it is asserted that it is this 'body' which we inhabit after death. It must be understood that, theoretically, this 'body' is not the soul; it is merely the soul's vehicle, just as the physical body is the soul's vehicle here in this life. It is that through which it expresses itself. It was this 'body' to which St. Paul referred (I Cor. 15:44) when he said:

" . . . There is a natural body, and there is a spiritual body."

And again (II Cor. 12:2-4):

"I knew a man in Christ . . . (whether in the body or out of the body, I cannot tell; God knoweth), how

LOAVES AND FISHES

he was caught up into paradise, and heard unspeakable words, which it is not lawful for a man to utter. . . .”

In short, he had a clairvoyant vision when in his ethereal body.

Such clairvoyant revelations are by no means unique, since we know them to have been received by Swedenborg, A. J. Davis, Hudson Tuttle, and many others.

Premonitions and precognitions, in which the future is in some manner foreseen, are from the point of view of common sense among the most incredible of all psychic phenomena. Nevertheless, an extraordinary mass of evidence exists, seeming to prove that such is the case in fact. Such premonitory flashes are, as a rule, quite unsought and spontaneous, and usually refer to some incident in the life of the seer, though occasionally they may refer to others. Very rarely are such premonitions of an impersonal character. This is an interesting and suggestive fact, which will be amplified later. Suffice it to say for the present that a quantity of evidential material has been published, seeming to show that such things as genuine premonitions exist. For this evidence I would refer the interested reader to Mrs. Henry Sidgwick's paper, *On the Evidence for Premonitions* (*Proceedings S. P. R.*, Vol. V, pp. 288-354); Mr. F. W. H. Myers' article on *Precognition* (Vol. XI, pp. 408-593); Mr. F. H. Saltmarsh's *Report on Cases of Apparent Precognition* (Vol. XLII, pp. 49-103), etc. Herein a number of well-evidenced cases may be found.

Such premonitions may occur either during the wak-

LOAVES AND FISHES

ing hours or during sleep; there may, therefore, be premonitory, telepathic and clairvoyant dreams, imparting information when the conscious mind is in abeyance. Such supernormal dreams are not, of course, explicable on ordinary psychological lines, nor are they capable of being explained away by psycho-analysis. They belong in a category by themselves. It would be possible to refer to many well-evidenced cases of this character. However, the point I wish to make here is that, if such supernormal dreams occur now, and that fairly constantly, as seems to be the case, there is no reason for supposing that they should not always have occurred. Thus the accounts of predictions and 'dreams which foretell the future' given in both the Old and New Testaments may very well be based upon fact, and were precisely what they were said to be, *viz.*, dream experiences of a prophetic character, which on occasion were subsequently fulfilled.

The dream-consciousness, the subconscious mind or one active portion of it, has also been shown to be the source of occasional flashes of genius, intuition, inspiration, and many other unusual phenomena. Whatever the ultimate source of such information may be, it is certain that this invariably comes through the subconscious mind, if it is not generated within its depths. Hence all seers, mystics and prophets are more or less dreamers. Also, they are frequently eccentric, and unable to distinguish the possibly genuine inspirational messages which come through them from those of subconscious origin. When their innate psychic faculty goes awry, this frequently happens. Then they

LOAVES AND FISHES

continue to make predictions which turn out to be totally false; they become 'false prophets.' Viewed in the light of psychic phenomena, many of these accounts lend themselves to a perfectly rational and intelligible explanation.

Hypnotism is now fairly well understood, but it must be remembered that until the last century nothing was known regarding it, and the power of suggestion was scarcely recognized. Automatic writing and crystal-gazing have only won acceptance within the past few years; now these are acknowledged to be valuable methods of exploring the subconscious mind, and occasionally of obtaining supernormal information. Psychometry (the ability to tell the past history of an object merely by handling it) is still unaccepted in many quarters, though there is much respectable evidence in its favor. The same may be said of other psychic phenomena of like character.

I have spoken of automatic writing. While this usually (psychiatrists would say invariably) emanates from the subconscious mind, there is evidence that supernormal information is frequently elicited by this means. Mrs. L. E. Piper, discovered by Professor William James in 1885, and certainly one of the most remarkable mediums of modern times, obtained by this means practically all her 'communications,' during the latter years of her life. As we know, this material was so striking and so filled with veridical and verifiable data, that a number of eminent scientific men became converted, largely because of it, to a belief in the spiritualistic interpretation of the facts. Material was thus

LOAVES AND FISHES

obtained which the medium did not know, and could not possibly have discovered. The reports concerning this medium cover hundreds of printed pages in the *Proceedings* of the Psychical Society. Occasionally languages unknown to the medium have been written; when this occurs, we have what is technically known as a case of 'xenoglossy.'

Analogous to the above are cases of automatic speech, when the (usually entranced) subject carries on a conversation or delivers a series of utterances as to the content of which he is normally quite unconscious. Many mediumistic 'communications' are of this character, the messages often giving information of a striking and supernormal nature. Inspirational discourses belong to the same general category. There is evidence that many of the ancient Oracles were similarly 'inspired,' and that they frequently gave forth information of a definitely supernormal character. A study of the Delphic and Sibylline Oracles from the point of view of modern psychical research becomes one of profound interest.

One form of automatic speech is known as 'glossolalia,' or 'speaking with tongues,' in which the subject gives utterance to strange sounds or apparently speaks in languages unknown to him. Doctor George B. Cutten has published a very interesting work on this subject, to which I shall have occasion to refer when discussing the New Testament cases of like nature.

Automatic speech and writing may be obtained in a relatively normal condition, but they occur with far greater frequency when the medium is entranced. This

LOAVES AND FISHES

medium-trance is certainly different from any other type of trance known to us, and requires special study in itself, as William James pointed out in his *Psychology*. The majority of alleged 'communications' from spiritual Entities have been received, either through speech or writing, when the psychic was in a trance state. While I cannot, of course, stop to consider the nature of this evidence in the present place, it may be said that some of this is extremely striking and compelling. Ecstasy and visions of a spiritual world are frequent accompaniments of these exalted states. A darker side of the subject is occasionally presented in cases of so-called 'obsession,' in which malevolent influences seemingly take the place of beneficent ones. This subject will be found considered at some length in Chapter XI, devoted to Possession, so that we need not deal with it further here.

Another form of mental mediumship remains to be mentioned. This consists in 'clairaudience,' wherein the 'communications' take the form of a 'voice' speaking to the psychic, who then interprets words which appear to be spoken into his ear, or more inwardly by means of some direct mental impression. Socrates, Joan of Arc, and many others have heard voices of this character, as well as modern mediums. That this voice is not merely hallucinatory is proved by the fact that supernormal information is often conveyed by it, material which the subject could not possibly know. Therein lies the essential difference between all purely subjective experiences and those seemingly supernormal in character. Mr. Andrew Lang stated this difference very succinctly

LOAVES AND FISHES

when he said, in his article on *The Voices of Jeanne d'Arc* (*Proceedings* S. P. R., XI, pp. 198-212):

“‘Come to the Salpêtrière,’ said a man of science to an Abbé, ‘and I will show you twenty Jeannes d’Arc.’

“‘Has one of them given us back Alsace and Lorraine?’ said the Abbé. There is the *crux*.”

I have reserved for final discussion the greatest question of all: the final problem toward which all psychic investigation seemingly tends. I speak of the evidence for survival. There has been accumulated by students of psychical research a great body of scientific evidence bearing upon this momentous question. It has been made a scientific problem, insofar as the nature of the facts investigated permitted it, and the essential question is one of proof of personal identity, the survival of individual consciousness. This evidence seems to show that the ‘personality’ known to us, continues to persist apart from the physical brain, carrying with it the memories and associations experienced in life. The accumulation and sifting of this evidence has been a most laborious and difficult procedure, and the utmost pains have been taken to make it as conclusive as possible. All sorts of complications and problems present themselves to the researcher in this field, and it must not be thought that the competent investigator is ignorant of these difficulties. It may be well to epitomize a few of these.

In the first place it is always necessary to eliminate possible fraud; to show that any particular psychic or medium could not have obtained the knowledge displayed by any system of inquiry or investigation.

LOAVES AND FISHES

Fraudulent mediums have done so, and a number of these have been exposed. In the cases of those mediums given serious consideration by psychic students, however, this possibility was eliminated very early in their career. Mrs. Piper, for example, when she first came under the supervision of Doctor Richard Hodgson, was watched by detectives for some time, to see that she did not employ any normal means of acquiring information about prospective sitters. When she visited England, she was met at the dock by Sir Oliver Lodge, and immediately taken by him to his home, where she remained for some weeks. During this period, with her permission, all her incoming and outgoing mail was read; visitors were not allowed; sitters were introduced under other names, or under no name. All the servants in the house had been changed the day before her arrival, so that no one in the house could have given her any information concerning the family. Arrangements for sittings were made by Sir Oliver, and very often the sitters were scientific men, who met the medium only a few minutes before the sitting began. Sometimes the sitter only entered the room after the medium had gone into trance. And so on. In short, it was thoroughly established at the time that there could be given no normal explanation of the knowledge displayed in her trance, and that, consequently, whatever the explanation might be for the results obtained, this one at least was excluded. And the same may be said of other psychics since studied by members of the S. P. R., and by other reputable bodies of investigators.

Having eliminated this possibility, the next question

LOAVES AND FISHES

which confronted the minds of those studying cases of this character was: May not some alternate possibility exist, other than the spiritualistic, that would enable us to account for the results? May not some other supernormal explanation be possible, without invoking the spirits of the departed? Only one such possibility seems to present itself, and this has been stretched to the utmost, in an endeavor to make it cover and explain the phenomena presented. This consists in a combination of subconscious dramatization on the part of the medium, plus telepathic, clairvoyant and perhaps other supernormal powers, which enable the psychic to 'tap' not only the mind of the sitter, but perhaps other living minds, and from them extract the information necessary to give the appearance of genuine 'spirit messages' not actually emanating from that source. This is, so to say, the classical rival theory to the spiritualistic.

We know that the subconscious mind has extraordinary powers of dramatization, imagination and play-acting. This is exemplified in our dreams, in hypnotic phenomena, in various psychopathic cases, and in multiple personality—all matters of common knowledge today. This being so, is it not possible, and in fact probable, that the *soi-disant* personalities manifesting in spiritistic séances are of a similar nature, and also represent merely the subconscious personifications unknowingly created by the medium's deeper self?

This is an extraordinarily complicated and difficult question, which has been discussed over hundreds of pages of the Society's *Proceedings*, and the present volume is obviously not the place to enter into any detailed

LOAVES AND FISHES

discussion of the question. Very briefly, it may be said that this possibility has always been held in mind, and that many such personifications have undoubtedly been shown to exist. At the same time, there are other cases which are exceedingly difficult to account for on this theory. There have been noted personal traits and characteristics, typical reactions, expressions of opinion, habits of thought, tricks of speech, long-forgotten memories, etc., quite characteristic of the alleged communicator in life as verified by those well-known to him; all these have been observed as seemingly emanating from an individual whom the medium did not know and certainly had never seen. Many of these are exceedingly difficult to account for on the basis of pure subconscious dramatization, for how is the mind of the sensitive to invent a systematic and well-knit characterization of the kind, all the essential details of which were true to life? At the same time, cautious psychic investigators have for the most part been willing to admit, for the sake of argument, that this would not in itself furnish conclusive evidence in favor of survival, and have rested their case upon the supernormal knowledge actually displayed by these communicators, *i.e.*, evidence of personal identity and specific memories which they seemingly exhibited, and which certainly could not have been known to the medium.

But here other possibilities present themselves. Might not this supernormal information have been obtained from the sitter's mind (conscious or subconscious) by means of telepathy? Might not all this represent merely a case of mind-reading? For evidential purposes, it

LOAVES AND FISHES

has been assumed by psychic investigators that any such information known to the sitter, even if completely forgotten by him, *may* have been obtained in this manner. (It may not have been so obtained at all, since common memories and associations are frequent, but as I have said, for evidential purposes, this has been assumed to be at least a possibility.) Nevertheless, many communications have been received, in which have been given facts entirely unknown to the sitter, but subsequently verified by him on inquiry or through correspondence. Yet here again it might be objected that these facts were in the mind of some living person; and, if telepathy be a fact, what is to prevent such living minds from being unknowingly 'tapped' and information extracted from them, by the supernormal powers of the medium? How are we to exclude this possibility?

Two replies to this objection may be made: the first logical, the second factual.

A certain individual, say John Jones, dies and afterwards claims to communicate. Statements are made of certain facts unknown to the sitter. He subsequently ascertains that these are correct. One or two of these facts are known, let us say, to the communicator's uncle, living in Omaha; one or two to a grandmother living in Boston; several others to a brother residing in Los Angeles. These are somehow gathered together, welded into a consistent personality, and palmed off on the sitter as the spirit of the deceased person himself! Something of this sort would be required in order to substantiate this hypothesis.

LOAVES AND FISHES

But, assuming this possibility, for the sake of argument, certain difficulties at once present themselves as soon as we begin to analyze this theory in detail. How, among the millions of memories in the minds of these several individuals, are the particular memories relating to John Jones to be identified and selected? And who or what does the selecting? Are our memories in some way labelled, like bottles in a drug store? It would be preposterous to suppose so. Then how are such memories to be identified? And how are they to be welded together into a consistent whole, when once acquired? And how discriminate between the memories relating to the life of that particular individual, and those relating to the life of another person? It will be seen that we land in a maze of difficulties and absurdities as soon as we endeavor to formulate this hypothesis in any precise detail, and press it to a logical conclusion.

Furthermore, factual material has occasionally been obtained which was provably not in the mind of any living individual, but which was subsequently verified by painstaking inquiry. [Examples of this are the finding of the will of James L. Chaffin (*Proc.* Part 103), and discovery of the Edgar and Loretto Chapels at Glastonbury Abbey; see *The Gate of Remembrance* and *The Hill of Vision*, by Frederick Bligh Bond.] Cases such as these are assuredly striking. I have had one such case in my own personal experience.

Then again, experiments have been tried in attempts to eliminate all possible telepathic interference. Among these are :

LOAVES AND FISHES

(1) Post mortem letters: the contents of letters written in life and filed for safe-keeping, given post mortem by the original writer. (Not absolutely conclusive, and many though not all of these have failed.)

(2) Classical and other knowledge possessed by the communicator in life, and certainly unknown to the medium, given by him. (Some excellent and strikingly successful cases of this character are on record.)

(3) Languages spoken, unknown to the medium, but known to the communicator. (A few striking cases of this kind also recorded.)

(4) Cross correspondences between mediums: that is, parts of a certain message given through one automaticist and parts through another; these, when pieced together, are found to constitute a consistent, whole message. (A number of striking cases of this character are on record.)

(5) Proxy sittings: in which the sitter knew nothing of the communicator, and hence was obviously unable to furnish any information telepathically or otherwise. (Many striking successes.)

(6) Book and newspaper tests: very complicated and technical, which cannot be described here. (Many eminently successful.)

(7) Personality tests, employing word-association tests and the galvanometer, for characteristic, personal reactions. (Some striking results obtained: see especially *Bulletin I*, of the American Psychical Institute, and *Proceedings S. P. R.*, Part 136; July, 1934.)

It will be seen, therefore, that extraordinary pains have been taken by psychic students to test along purely

LOAVES AND FISHES

scientific lines this question of personal identity and human survival. As the result of these investigations, many researchers have come to the conclusion that human survival is thereby proved and the continuity of life established. This result, it will be observed, has been attained solely by reason of scientific investigations in the field of psychical research, and is quite independent of emotional reactions or traditional beliefs of any sort. For this reason it is all the more striking, and the more strongly confirmatory of this belief in survival which constitutes the core of all sound religious faith.

There can be no doubt that, if human immortality could be proved by purely objective means, it would profoundly affect humanity and influence the ethics and conduct of the whole human race. No longer would man be uncertain as to his destiny; no longer would he question the value and the meaning of life. These would become obvious to him, and certitude would replace doubt. Would not this in itself represent a fundamentally important forward step in the progress of humanity?

And if such psychic phenomena do actually occur, they serve to throw a flood of light upon the Biblical miracles, rendering many of them intelligible and credible, even if they do not actually explain them. At least analogies can be drawn between these miracles and the better-understood phenomena of our own day; they need no longer be rejected *in toto* merely because of their seeming impossibility, even by the most convinced Rationalist, provided he is prepared to accept the reality

LOAVES AND FISHES

of certain psychic phenomena, for which there is excellent contemporary evidence.

So much for psychic phenomena, properly so-called. I must now say a few words regarding modern *psychotherapy*, though these remarks must necessarily be brief; I reserve discussion of particular problems until later, in connection with the healing miracles attributed to Jesus and the disciples. (See Chapter IX.)

Faith cure, mind-cure and suggestive therapeutics in the broadest sense have been practised since the veriest antiquity. Such records are well known to us. About a hundred and fifty years ago, Anton Mesmer founded his school of *mesmerism*, which was supplanted in the middle of the last century by hypnotism, promulgated by Doctor Braid. Charcot and his school believed that the observed results were due mainly to 'nervous' (physical) causes, but later researches by Bernheim, Moll, Liégeois, Liébault, and others, proved that these were due to 'suggestion'; this is now the generally accepted view.

Just how this works in order to produce its results, is indeed still a good deal of a mystery. It is all very well to attribute certain results to 'suggestion'; the question remains: what takes place within the subject's body to bring these results to pass? Just what is the mechanism employed? To this question we have, in many cases, only the vaguest answer. Not only have mental and moral reforms been brought about as the result of hypnotic suggestion, psycho-analysis and general psychotherapeutics, but there have been produced

LOAVES AND FISHES

physiological results of an extraordinary character. Cures have been effected and results achieved for which it is most difficult to account. At the same time, no one nowadays attributes such cures to 'miraculous' power, as certain conditions are necessary in order to effect such cures; if the laws governing such healings are not followed the results do not come to pass. Science may be unable to explain in detail precisely what happens on any particular occasion, but it is generally believed that this is merely because we do not, as yet, understand all the laws governing mental and physical reactions. But that the day will come, in the not-too-distant future, when they will be understood. Some of these cures may be definitely supernormal, so far as we can see at present, but none of them are 'miraculous,' in the traditional meaning of that term.

Instances of *stigmata* are illustrative of the point here made. Such cases, long ridiculed and rejected by scientific men, are now definitely recognized as actually existent. As the result of intense contemplation upon the figure and passion of Christ, bleeding patches corresponding to the wounds on Christ's body have developed upon the hands and feet of certain devoutly religious persons. These phenomena, rejected by the scientists, were accepted as 'miraculous' by the devout. Yet practically identical phenomena have been experimentally produced as the result of hypnotic suggestion, where no religious factor was involved. Krafft-Ebing, the noted psychiatrist, reports a case in which a pair of scissors were laid upon the chest of one of his patients, the suggestion being given that they were red-hot. As

LOAVES AND FISHES

a result, a fiery red outline appeared upon her chest, corresponding to the outline of the scissors. Many similar accounts could be cited, but hypnotism and psychotherapeutics are now so well understood that it is unnecessary for me to go into greater detail here.

Regarding cures of blindness by means of suggestion and allied processes, Doctor Erskine gives several extraordinary cases in his *Hypnotist's Case Book*. Doctor Thomas Bret, of Lisbon, reports similar cures. A series of remarkable cures has seemingly been effected of late years by Mr. C. R. Cody, a descendant of the world-famous 'Buffalo Bill,' by touching the eyes of his patients with his tongue. It is asserted that he frequently removes a sort of film in this manner, previously undetected and invisible. Up to July, 1934, the sight of 117 people was said to have been restored by him. It is true that many of these cures do not appear to be well-evidenced, from a strictly scientific point of view. But might not this objection be raised equally against the older, traditional cases? The newer instances are assuredly better evidenced than they!

It has lately been suggested that blindness may be associated with clairvoyance in many instances, so that the patient may indeed 'see' after treatment, but not with the physical eyes and in the usual manner. Several good clairvoyant mediums have been quite blind. In this connection, reference should be made to Mr. Jules Romains' book *Eyeless Sight*, which contains a number of striking cases in which the blind were seemingly made to see.

The healing miracles of Jesus are instances of a vast

LOAVES AND FISHES

number of similar cases which might be given, ranging from the earliest times to our own day. Analogous cures are now being performed at Lourdes and similar shrines throughout the world.* It is all very well to label these cases 'cures by suggestion.' Giving a technical name to some extraordinary event does not explain it, nor does the term 'suggestion' in any way enable us to understand how suggestion works, nor the mechanism of its inner operation. In many instances an extraordinary infiltration of tissue seems to take place in a phenomenally short space of time (the same thing might occur, normally, over a much longer space of time). In such cases, it would seem that the life-force has somehow been stimulated into phenomenal activity, much as the growth of some plants is stimulated by the application of colored light, or fruit-flies by X-rays. A speeding-up process, unlike anything we observe in daily life, seems to have taken place. Many circumstantial accounts exist as to the preternatural stimulation of plant-growth by medicine men, both among the American Indians and also in India, China, Tibet and other countries.

It is possible, also, that biological activities of a more supernormal character take place at such times.† Doctor Gustave Geley, in his book *From the Unconscious to the Conscious*, has drawn many interesting and suggestive analogies between materialization phenomena

* Doctor Alexis Carrel of the Rockefeller Institute has examined many of these Lourdes phenomena; 'cures' at many of these shrines have been studied by medical committees.

† For some of the suggestions that follow, I am indebted to Mr. Felix J. Frazer.

LOAVES AND FISHES

as witnessed in a séance, and certain recognized biological facts. Thus, the caterpillar, after entering the cocoon, is soon resolved into an amorphous mass, which in turn develops into the fully formed butterfly. Likewise, the 'ectoplasm,' so often noted in séances, usually appears at first as an amorphous mass, which is soon thereafter transformed into heads, hands and bits of living bodies. Sometimes these are abortive and malformed, sometimes perfect in the minutest anatomical detail. In both instances, however, a living, directive force is operative, moulding matter into the semblance of animate forms. This directional guidance is certainly not that of the conscious mind of the subject, any more than it is due to the conscious mind of the caterpillar. It is some innate, deeply-seated directional activity on the part of Nature, possessing a knowledge of life-formation far beyond that of any living biologist.

In many séances, mediums have been found to lose weight unaccountably. This fact has been accurately tested by scales, and there is no doubt as to the occurrence of the phenomenon itself. Energy is drawn from the mediums also, so that they are often weak and depleted for hours after a sitting. This likewise has been instrumentally checked. Extraordinary drops in temperature have been noted, again registered by self-recording thermometers, enclosed in netting cages. These drops are virtually instantaneous, of six, eight, ten or more degrees Fahrenheit.*

* Cf. "Some Account of the Thermal Variations as Recorded During the Trance State of the Psychic, Stella C.," by Harry Price, *Journal*, A. S. P. R., November, 1927.

LOAVES AND FISHES

Losses in temperatures are normally coincidental with losses of energy, and these have been accompanied by associated losses of matter, as shown by the decrease in weight. Energy and substance seem, therefore, to have been abstracted from the body of the psychic at such times. In séances, these are utilized for the production of phenomena. But it is possible that other things may happen. If an injury or diseased area be present, might it not be possible that the matter in this area would be drawn upon, during a psychic cure, and subsequently replaced by other, healthy tissue—which would be materialized in the area formerly occupied by the diseased tissue? On this view, matter drawn from that area would be resolved into an amorphous mass and re-integrated as healthy tissue, which would then re-flow into the body to the area in question, replacing the diseased tissue withdrawn therefrom. If anything of this sort were actually to occur, it would enable us more completely to explain miraculous cures, from their physiological side at least.

There are certain analogies which may be drawn in support of such a view. In the first place, it is known that, in cases of fasting, the less important tissues of the body are drawn upon first to feed the more important organs. In cases of death from starvation, while other portions of the body are wasted enormously, the nervous system hardly loses weight at all. Nature has seen to it that this precious vehicle of our life remains almost intact to the last, utilizing other material in the body in order to feed it.* In diseased conditions, the

* Cf. *Vitality, Fasting and Nutrition*, by Hereward Carrington, 1908, etc.

LOAVES AND FISHES

affected areas are first of all attacked and eliminated, the morbid material in the system is expelled and the patient cured through fasting. This has now become so fully realized that one famous physician has remarked: 'Take away food from a sick man, and you have begun to starve, not the man but the disease.' The therapeutic value of fasting is very great; it is interesting to note that all the great religious teachers of the world have fasted at one time or another while developing their psychic and spiritual powers, just as do leaders among primitive peoples today.

Inasmuch as this is the case, it is certainly permissible to suppose that, in cases of 'miraculous' or psychic healing, the diseased area would be that most rapidly affected by any great influx of life-force; this morbid material might be drawn upon and resolved into an amorphous mass of living, organic material, which might be, so to say, 'sterilized' in the process, and converted into healthful tissue. This material would then re-flow into the organism, replace the energy and substance which had been temporarily lost (as shown by the depletion of energy, loss of weight, and sudden lowering of the bodily temperature) and heal the sore or wound by the rapid infiltration of healthy tissue into that area.

In brief, the theory involves the supposition of a temporary de-materialization and re-materialization of the parts involved. If we could conceive that any process such as this actually occurs, we could in some slight degree begin to understand the actual *modus operandi* involved in cases of 'miraculous' healing. It will be seen that there are certain analogies to go by in such a con-

LOAVES AND FISHES

ception, and certain well-attested psychic phenomena, which tend to support it. At least the suggestion is offered for what it may be worth, for certainly these extraordinary cases are fairly numerous and require some explanation.

There are certain individuals from whose bodies there flows an invisible and unknown energy of some sort, vital in character, which has the power of either stimulating or retarding growth, of killing or accelerating the activity of organic matter brought within its immediate range. In a series of careful experiments undertaken some years ago by two French physicians, Doctors Clarac and Llaguet, at Bordeaux, with a Mme. X, it was shown that daily treatments of dead bodies with her hands (placed a few centimeters above them) delayed or altogether prevented decomposition from taking place. Instead of putrefying, they desiccated and became embalmed.* Similar observations have since been made by other investigators. Only lately Professor Otto Rahn of Cornell University has shown that vital radiations issuing from the human body may either stimulate or kill yeast cells when 'treated' in this manner. The early mesmerists and magnetic healers believed implicitly in such an emanation, and its reality seems also to be proved by certain mediumistic phenomena noted at séances. All in all, therefore, there is much to be said in its favor, and more than once it has been suggested that the 'power' which Jesus felt flowing from Him when He was touched by some one in the

* Is it not possible that the lost art of Egyptian mummification might contain within it a secret such as this?

LOAVES AND FISHES

crowd, was none other than this vital force, which flows from one living organism to another much as heat flows from a hotter to a colder body. It is this power which is said to be instrumental in healing in cases of the 'laying on of hands.' Belief in this goes back to the veriest antiquity, and it would seem incredible that any belief held so universally and so persistently down the ages, should not be founded upon some underlying truth.

Associated with these quasi-physiological activities is the enormous curative power of suggestion itself, its influence upon the conscious and subconscious mind of the patient, and through it upon the functional activities of the organism. The extent of this influence has never been accurately gaged, even in the cases of 'normal' individuals, while in certain psychopathic types this influence is very marked and most extraordinary. Furthermore, certain methods of psychic training seem to increase markedly the influence of the mind over the body, and the degree to which functions, normally unconscious, may be brought under the domination of the conscious mind. In the cases of Oriental Fakirs, for instance, the rate of the heart can be slowed or accelerated almost at will; the breathing can be suspended for long periods; the activities of the bowels can be controlled; total suspension of consciousness can be achieved; bodily catalepsy can be attained; while wounds can be permitted to bleed or inhibited from bleeding, at will. In many reported cases, actual death has been induced by auto-suggestion. On the other hand, there are numerous instances in which individuals have main-

LOAVES AND FISHES

tained a grip upon life, and continued to live hour after hour and even day after day when expert medical opinion has rendered its verdict that death must be inevitable within a few minutes. How are such facts to be explained? Is it not evident that our science of life is still in its infancy, and that even yet comparatively little is known concerning the relation between mind and matter, and the infinite possibilities of life?

The internal evidence, afforded by the Gospel narratives themselves, points conclusively to the fact that Jesus possessed an intuitive knowledge of these subtle, psychic laws: the reality and curative power of 'human magnetism,' the potent influence of suggestion, and various supernormal resultant phenomena associated with them. One need not assume that He was in possession of the underlying scientific bases of the phenomena obtained or the results secured. This knowledge does not lie within the conscious mind of man. It is more intimately associated with Nature, and the knowledge which Nature somehow possesses of all life-phenomena. No man has succeeded in the artificial creation of life; yet Nature, by some mysterious process, succeeded in perfecting and evolving life upon our planet. No Psychic, producing genuine physical phenomena has any idea, consciously, as to how these extraordinary results are obtained; yet some interior portion of his Being thoroughly understands the psycho-physiological intricacies involved, and succeeds in manipulating them successfully.

{ Similarly, we need not suppose that Jesus knew the scientific laws underlying the cures He wrought, or

LOAVES AND FISHES

the 'miraculous' powers He wielded. Doubtless, He was not familiar with the nature of biological radiations, or the powers of the subconscious mind, or the modern theories of psycho-analysis! But He knew pragmatically that certain results followed certain causes, could they be stimulated into activity. Psychic truths are not perceived by the conscious mind, but by some deeper portion of the Psyche. Mathematical and metaphysical truths are similarly apprehended. The healing miracles, insofar as they represent possible supernormal events, doubtless exemplify Jesus' hidden knowledge of life-phenomena and the interior perception, by Him, of the psychic laws underlying their reality and manifestation.

VII

EVIDENCES OF PSYCHIC PHENOMENA IN THE LIFE OF CHRIST

(It is only natural that the healings and other 'miracles' of the more spectacular nature should occupy the major portion of the Gospel narratives, and that the less striking and spectacular should be relegated to the background of the narrative.)

This might be true for several reasons. In the first place, such manifestations are seemingly far less uncommon in the Orient than they are with us. It is a well-known fact that the natives of India and Africa have some unexplained means of conveying information over long distances, and this faculty is probably possessed in some degree by many Orientals. Such phenomena would therefore call for less attention than would similar manifestations, were they to occur in our midst. In the second place, it is only natural that the more extraordinary manifestations would be 'played-up,' to the exclusion of the lesser ones, just as they would be by any reporter in our own day! When Coué came to America, his 'cures' were the central theme of discussion, and if at times he seemed to manifest some signs of telepathic or clairvoyant ability, these would almost certainly have been overlooked by contemporary witnesses, whose main interest and attention would have been centered upon his remarkable cures.

LOAVES AND FISHES

Doubtless the same conditions prevailed at the time of Christ, and reports of the minor wonders were crowded out by the records of the greater. Nevertheless there are, scattered here and there throughout the New Testament, records of such minor occurrences; it may be of interest to draw attention to a few of them as illustrative of the general psychic power possessed by Jesus.

Let us take first a few examples of His telepathic ability.

When Jesus healed 'one sick of the palsy,' in Capernaum, certain of the scribes who were present thought to themselves that His remark 'thy sins be forgiven thee' was blasphemy—'and immediately when Jesus perceived in his spirit that they so reasoned within themselves, he said unto them, Why reason ye these things in your hearts?' (Mark 2:8). Here, assuredly, we have an instance of the perception of the inner thoughts of the bystanders.

The same sort of thing is reported in John (6:64) when it is said: 'For Jesus knew from the beginning who they were that believed not, and who should betray him.'

Evidences of direct clairvoyant perception are not lacking, as for instance in Matthew (21:1-2):

'And when they drew nigh unto Jerusalem, and were come to Bethphage, unto the Mount of Olives, then sent Jesus two disciples, saying unto them, Go into the village over against you, and straightway ye shall find an ass tied, and a colt with her: loose them, and bring them unto me.'

LOAVES AND FISHES

Somewhat similar psychic ability is noted in John (4:17-19):

'The woman answered and said, I have no husband. Jesus said unto her, Thou hast well said, I have no husband. For thou hast had five husbands; and he whom thou now hast is not thy husband; in that saidst thou truly. And the woman saith unto him, Sir, I perceive that thou art a prophet (psychic).'

Again (John 4:39) the woman said that 'he told me all that ever I did.'

Not alone the validity but also the significance of inspirational discourses is emphasized time and time again in the Gospel narratives. Many of Christ's sermons and parables seem to have been of this character. In Mark 13:11, Jesus expressly said to his disciples:

'But when they shall lead you, and deliver you up, take no thought beforehand what ye shall speak, neither do ye premeditate: but whatever shall be given you in that hour, that speak ye: for it is not ye that speak, but the Holy Ghost.'

(In all such renditions, doubtless, the 'Holy Ghost' refers to the spirit of prophecy or inspiration, noted in many psychic and mediumistic persons.)

The fact that these utterances of Jesus were seemingly supernormal is evidenced in several passages, such as that in John (7:15) where it is said that:

' . . . the Jews marvelled, saying, How knoweth this man letters, having never learned?'

The same problem has arisen in our own day, in the cases of A. J. Davis, Hudson Tuttle, and many other mediums, who, as ignorant farmer lads of seventeen or

LOAVES AND FISHES

eighteen, dictated philosophical and scientific books, at least one of which, *The Arcana of Nature*, was subsequently quoted by both Büchner (*Force and Matter*) and by Darwin (*The Descent of Man*, p. 178).

Sir Arthur Conan Doyle has called attention to an interesting and significant fact in the life of Christ, which seems to have been entirely overlooked by all previous commentators, perhaps because they did not realize its significance or preferred to ignore it. When Christ was asked a question which called for a sudden decision, namely the fate of the woman who had been taken in sin . . . "what did He do? The very last thing that one would have suspected or invented. He stooped down before answering and wrote with His finger in the sand. This He did a second time upon a second catch-question being addressed to Him. Can any theologian give a reason for such an action? I hazard the opinion that among the many forms of mediumship which were possessed in the highest form by Christ, was the power of automatic writing, by which He summoned those great forces which were under His control to supply Him with the answer. Granting, as I freely do, that Christ was preternatural, in the sense that He was above and beyond ordinary humanity in His attributes, one may still inquire how far these powers were contained always within His human body, or how far He referred back to spiritual reserves beyond it . . ." (*The Vital Message*, p. 126).

Several instances of 'transfiguration' are noted in the Gospel narratives. Similar extraordinary and seemingly inexplicable cases have been noted in quite re-

LOAVES AND FISHES

cent times. Usually, though not invariably, these occur during séances when the medium is deeply entranced; in these cases the face of the psychic takes on a resemblance to some person who has died. Occasionally such transformations occur when the subject is in a psychopathological state, or even during natural sleep, and a few such cases have been subjected to careful study and observation. Doctor J. Maxwell (M.D.), records an instance of this character. He says:

"On January 1, 1903, my father began to feel the first attacks of the painful disease from which he died after six months of terrible suffering. . . . I watched him as he slept, and was not long in noticing that his physiognomy gradually assumed an aspect which was not his own. I finally observed that his face bore a striking resemblance to that of my mother. It was as though the mask of her face was placed over his own. . . . The appearance lasted for ten or twelve minutes; then it gradually disappeared, and my father assumed his habitual physiognomy. . . .

"This change was also noted by the servant who came into the room at the time, for, when she was told to look at the face of the sleeping man, she exclaimed: 'Oh, how he resembles poor Madame. It is striking, it is quite extraordinary!'"

Mr. Dennis Bradley, in his *Wisdom of the Gods*, describes an experience of his own with Mrs. Scales: "Gradually the whole expression of the medium's face changed completely. It was a transformation. Whilst the outline remained, the eyes and the expression became beautiful. . . ."

LOAVES AND FISHES

Similar experiences have been reported by the Reverend William J. Erwood, Allan Kardec, Colonel Olcott, Count Aksakof, and many other psychic investigators. The resemblance assumed to the deceased person (whom the medium has never seen) is often very striking. These manifestations are of great interest, from the physiological as well as from the psychological point of view. At least they show us that similar 'transfigurations' have been observed in our own day, and they certainly deserve most careful scientific study.

From the point of view of the psychic investigator, it is interesting to note the number of instances in which extraordinary phenomena were said to have occurred in darkness or semi-darkness. For certain types of manifestations the same conditions are essential to-day, and the cry of the sceptic, 'Why cannot these things happen in good light?' might just as well be applied to the problem of the older 'miracles.' The answer is, simply, that they do not, and various perfectly valid reasons have been advanced as to why this is so. The parallelism between the older and the newer manifestations is everywhere in evidence.

One frequently reads in the Biblical narratives of 'communion with angels,' and if we interpret this to mean communion with higher spiritual intelligences, this has of course an exact counterpart in our modern psychic 'communications.' There is no valid reason for thinking that this is not a perfectly logical and justifiable interpretation of the facts.

Christ's fast of forty days has by many been considered a 'miraculous' feat. If such a lengthy period of

LOAVES AND FISHES

abstinence was more or less approximated by the Saints and Mystics of the Middle Ages, this was by reason of some special Grace which sustained them during the period of their deprivation. Nowadays, however, it is well recognized that periods of fasting such as this are by no means impossible and have frequently been resorted to for therapeutic purposes as well as for spiritual enlightenment; the literature on fasting cases is now voluminous. But it is interesting to note that nearly all great spiritual teachers have undergone a more or less protracted period of fasting, or abstinence, immediately prior to their blossoming-forth as a Master or teacher of purblind humanity.

Of all the lesser psychic manifestations in Christ's life, however, none is so frequently reported as the cases of 'precognition' alleged to have occurred. Future events were envisioned and foreseen; then as now these were mostly of a personal character. In this they differed radically from the utterances of the Old Testament Prophets, who generally predicted national events, usually disasters! This is, to my mind, a most interesting and significant difference between the two. Well-evidenced modern cases of precognitions and premonitions almost invariably refer to the life of some individual, either the person having the psychic experience, or some one known to him. Curiously enough, these are frequently quite trivial and seemingly meaningless, judged from the standpoint of that individual's life. A glimpse of the future seems to be obtained for a moment; then the Curtain is again lowered, leaving the surrounding circumstances in as deep a cloud of

LOAVES AND FISHES

mystery as ever. Sometimes, it is true, these warnings are helpful, preventing the seer from performing some rash action which he might otherwise have undertaken. But the point remains that practically all well-evidenced modern cases of premonitions are *personal* in character, and do not relate to Cosmic events or national calamities. The same is true of the majority of Christ's premonitory warnings, and in this, as I have emphasized, they differ essentially from the general doleful utterances of the Old Testament Prophets. A citation of a few of His prophetic remarks will illustrate the point here made.

In Matt. 16:21, Jesus is said to have predicted His trial and death. This is repeated in Matt. 17:22, and in Matt. 20:18. This prophecy also occurs in Matt. 26:2; John 12:23; and John 13:18-21, etc.

On the other hand, in Luke 22:10-13, there is a typical instance of a personal precognition:

'And he said unto them, Behold, when ye are entered into the city, there shall a man meet you, bearing a pitcher of water; follow him into the house where he entereth in. . . . And he shall show you a large upper room furnished: there make ready. And they went, and found as he had said unto them . . .'

Again, in John 13:38, Jesus foretells that before the cock crows Peter will deny Him thrice. And in John 16:4, He urges the disciples to remember His predictions, and verify them as they occur.

These illustrative cases are probably sufficient to emphasize the point previously made as to the essential similarity of these instances to the modern cases of

LOAVES AND FISHES

precognition. They represent typical spontaneous psychic phenomena, precisely analogous to those reported today.

I have reserved for final discussion one question unique in character. I refer to:

THE BAPTISM OF JESUS

When Jesus went to John the Baptist, asking the latter to baptize Him, we are told that John at first refused to do so, saying that he had more need to be baptized of Christ. The reply was, 'suffer it to be so now,' and evidently John was over-persuaded, for he performed the required ceremony. As soon as it was over, Jesus came out of the water. . . .

' . . . and lo, the heavens were opened unto him, and he saw the Spirit of God descending like a dove, and lighting upon him:

'And lo a voice from heaven, saying, This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased' (Matt. 3:16-17).

This is one of the many passages which have been the cause of much misunderstanding, even ridicule. But I venture to suggest that this is because they have been very largely misinterpreted, and the present case is an example of this.

The literalist would probably contend that, had he been present in person, to witness the 'miracle,' he would have seen a sort of trap-door opened in Heaven, and a bird fly out and light upon Jesus' head or shoulder; also that he would have heard a voice like thun-

LOAVES AND FISHES

der giving utterance to the phrase in question. No wonder the Bible miracles have been rejected by modern science!

As a matter of fact, had our sceptic been there, he would have seen and heard nothing at all; Heaven was not opened to the multitude, but to Jesus alone, as a visionary experience. A careful re-reading of the text will prove this: 'Lo, the heavens were opened *unto him* . . .' Swedenborg, Andrew Jackson Davis and many others had similar celestial visions, when their spiritual faculties were opened; but no one assumes, in their cases, that the Walls of Heaven were solid, that the objects in their visions were material, or that their experiences were other than subjective—stimulated, perhaps, by some corresponding reality.

Surely it is the same in the case before us. The experience was internal rather than external. John said (1:32): 'I saw the spirit of God descending from heaven like a dove and lighting upon him.' One need not imagine that the Spirit of God was like a dove, as has been generally supposed; it was the descent that was like the *descent* of a dove, soft and gliding.

It is true that John states that he saw this also. But such things as 'telepathic hallucinations' are by no means uncommon, and scores of modern instances could be cited wherein two or more persons saw the same phantasmal form at the same moment, and subsequently described it in identical terms. Such psychological contagion is well known, especially in moments of great emotional stress; when the subjects are naturally psychic, as were both Jesus and John, there is no reason

LOAVES AND FISHES

to suppose that this might not have occurred. Luke, to be sure, intimates that the multitude also saw the prodigy, but this may be an error of translation; it is also certain that this account does not profess to be as circumstantial as Matthew's, being based more upon indirect hearsay. We all know to what an extent stories of the kind are naturally magnified in the telling! As the account reads in Matthew, it is a straightforward psychic experience paralleled by other visional experiences of a like nature.

As to the 'voice' which was heard by Jesus on that occasion, this was obviously part of the visional experience also, only the sense of hearing was appealed to in addition to the sense of sight. Again, it would be possible to cite many similar instances wherein apparitions have been heard to speak, by the percipient, often giving information unknown to him at the time but subsequently verified. The appearance, the voice, sometimes also the touch, are all part-and-parcel of the psychic experience. It seems very evident that this manifestation is quite analogous to others which have been recorded in modern times.

It is interesting to note that, according to Matthew (3:17) the voice does not call Jesus the Son of God, but says 'this is my beloved son.' The term rendered 'son' is *uios*, and more properly refers to a sort of spiritual relationship, in the same sense that it is likewise used in speaking of 'children of the highest,' 'children of the resurrection,' etc. In this sense, as many have previously pointed out, we are all 'sons of God.' It would seem highly probable, as will be set forth in

LOAVES AND FISHES

greater detail later, that the descent of the Holy Ghost is largely symbolic, signifying the influx of psychic energy and psychic capacity often noted in ecstatic states, and representing a kind of instantaneous illumination or 'Cosmic Consciousness,' which the subject experiences at that moment, and which affects and influences his entire life thereafter.*

* See Doctor Bucke's *Cosmic Consciousness* for many interesting modern cases of the kind.

VIII

HIS KNOWLEDGE OF PSYCHIC LAWS AND POWERS

I HAVE already indicated my belief that some great spiritual illumination occurred at some time or other during the life of Christ, probably during the latter period of the 'missing years,' just before He assumed His rôle of public Teacher. This experience changed the entire course of His life, as it has changed the lives of many others. Thenceforward, He felt impelled to impart this knowledge and inner wisdom to others. This He proceeded to do by His daily example and conversation, as well as by parables addressed to the multitude, wherein spiritual truths were imparted in a series of simple and easily-understood stories, whose exoteric meanings might be grasped by the simple intellects He addressed, and whose esoteric meanings would only be apparent to the few who perceived the underlying truths.

This lofty, spiritual quality of Christ's teachings, often in opposition to the creeds and dogmas of His day, is one of the fundamental tenets of the Christian doctrine. What is not so generally recognized, however, is the fact that He also possessed an innate grasp of fundamental psychic laws, as is evidenced over and over again in His life and teachings. The conditions under which any given phenomenon was produced, were given careful consideration and on several occasions He

LOAVES AND FISHES

would not even attempt its production if He felt that the prevailing adverse mental and physical conditions were too overwhelming. Quiet, solitude, and a suitable mental environment were often insisted upon. This is illustrated when Jesus healed the ruler's daughter; there were many scoffers and sceptics present, but Jesus put them all out. He realized the power of suggestion and the delicate nature of the forces He was handling, and He insisted upon a harmonious circle.

For a very similar reason, doubtless, secrecy was often requested; 'see thou tell no man' were the instructions given more than once. Christ realized that the narration of the incident to sceptics would only stir up their opposition and ridicule, and hence arouse doubts in the man's own mind as to whether he had really been cured or not, perhaps facilitating a relapse in consequence. This curious reversion of the human mind is a well-known psychological phenomenon. Professor Charles Richet has expressed it with great clarity and precision, in his paper *On the Conditions of Certainty*, published in the *Proceedings* of the S. P. R. (XIV, pp. 152-57) many years ago:

" . . . At the moment when these facts take place they seem to us certain, and we are willing to proclaim them openly, but when we return to ourselves, when we feel the irresistible influence of our environment, when our friends all laugh at our credulity—then we are almost disarmed, and we begin to doubt. May it not all have been an illusion? May I not have been grossly deceived? I *saw*, no doubt; but did I see aright? Who can prove to me that I did so?

LOAVES AND FISHES

"And then, as the moment of the experiment becomes more remote, that experiment which once seemed so conclusive, gets to seem more and more uncertain, and we end by letting ourselves be persuaded that we have been the victims of a trick!

"Our own conviction—the conviction of men who have seen—ought properly to convince other people; but, by a curious inversion of rôles, it is *their* conviction, the negative conviction of people who have *not* seen, and who ought not, one would think, to speak on the matter, which weakens and ultimately destroys our own conviction. . . ."

This fundamental weakness of the human mind was doubtless operative to the same degree in Christ's time. This fact certainly was known to Christ, partly by reason of His knowledge of psychic law and partly, no doubt, as the result of bitter experience. Hence His instruction to remain silent. Hence, also, His insistence upon faith as a requisite in the production of psychic phenomena of any character. It is hardly necessary to emphasize the importance which Christ placed upon faith, and His insistence upon it as a fundamental requisite in the person healed. Over and over again He reiterates this, and asserts the relative impossibility of producing results in its absence. In the words of modern psychotherapy, 'suggestibility and co-operation on the part of the patient are essential factors.' These were well recognized by Jesus, a fact which in itself shows us that He did not attempt to perform 'miracles,' in the traditional, orthodox sense of the word, but worked in accordance with well-verified psychic laws.

LOAVES AND FISHES

Faith, as here defined, probably represents the complete acceptance and belief on the part of the subconscious or 'subjective' mind. If this deeper portion of the human psyche be reached, and its conviction in a certain result be assured, then that result will come to pass. Failures are probably due to resistance or only partial incorporation of this suggested belief. Once it has been accepted whole-heartedly, however, by reason of the 'faith' of the individual, the resultant cure (or whatever it may be) inevitably comes to pass.

While we are discussing this question of Faith, this may be a good opportunity to discuss the definition of it given in Hebrews (11:1) as 'the substance of things hoped for, the evidence of things not seen.' This passage has been referred to over and over again as emphasizing not only the necessity for faith, but also the fact that faith and faith alone should give us assurance of immortality, and consequently that any attempted *proof* of human survival would be wrong. It is upon this passage, doubtless, that there is founded much of the orthodox Church's opposition to any investigations of a psychical or spiritualistic nature, which aim to prove survival.

Aside from the obvious fact that we live in a sceptical and materialistic age, in which 'faith no longer charms with her magic wand' and concrete proof of everything is required, the very wording of the passage itself conveys a meaning absolutely contrary to that usually given it. So far from denying the necessity for this evidence, the passage in question absolutely demands it as a prerequisite for its ultimate acceptance.

LOAVES AND FISHES

Read the definition again: 'Faith is the substance of things hoped for, the evidence of things not seen.' Invisible realities give *evidence* of their existence in the only way in which they can: by a series of phenomenal happenings. *Substance* represents something into which we can, metaphorically speaking, get our teeth. It is some sort of tangible reality. Rightly interpreted, therefore, it seems to me that this oft-quoted passage, upon which the Church's opposition to psychic phenomena largely hangs, bears a meaning precisely contrary to that usually given it. It might perhaps be freely rendered:

Faith (conviction) results from *evidence* of an Invisible World, convincing us of the *substantial* (solid, proved) reality of that for which man hopes, *viz.*, immortality.

Interpreted in this manner it is apparent that Paul did not intend to insist upon blind belief on the part of his hearers; rather he was emphasizing to them the necessity of intense, inner conviction, based upon the experienced evidences of a spiritual world—coming to them either in the form of some interior illumination or 'conversion,'* or in the form of some more tangible evidence which their minds were capable of grasping and assimilating.

The importance of prayer as a means of obtaining this spiritual influx is repeatedly emphasized in the

*I use the word "conversion" here in the sense given in James' *Varieties of Religious Experience*, p. 196, where he says: "To say that a man is 'converted' means, in these terms, that religious ideas, previously peripheral in his consciousness, now take a central place, and that religious aims form the habitual center of his energy. . . ."

LOAVES AND FISHES

Gospel narratives, and of course an enormous literature upon the subject now exists. Quite aside from any supernatural element connected with prayer, it may be said that there are three obviously beneficial results to be obtained therefrom: (1) an *act of faith* is required which, at the very lowest estimate, must act as a powerful auto-suggestion; (2) it constitutes, in the words of the psychoanalyst, a 'purgation treatment,' relieving the mind of repressions and complexes; (3) it may open the door to the inflow of psychical energies rendering physical and mental rejuvenation as well as spiritual and moral uplift. There may be a still further efficacy in prayer, but these results at least seem to be based upon sound psychological principles.*

The importance of group prayer is also emphasized in several passages in the New Testament: 'when two or three are gathered together . . .' etc. All psychic students know that a group of sympathetic and harmonious persons will induce results which would be impossible without their mutual co-operation; at such times there seems to be generated 'power' which no individual in that group would be capable of furnishing. Christ evidently chose His disciples because He felt them to be suitable psychical coadjutors, capable of forming with Him a powerful group or Circle. For no other assignable reason would He have picked the men He did. With them He felt the necessary *rapport* which was lacking in others He contacted. That Jesus had pronounced telepathic faculty is evidenced by the records;

* See Myers' *Human Personality*, II, pp. 309-14, "Prayer and Supplication," for an interesting discussion of this subject.

LOAVES AND FISHES

He exercised this on more than one occasion, as for instance when He cured the nobleman's son by means of what would now be called 'absent treatment' at a distance. For the exercise of many of His psychic powers Christ required darkness, just as similar manifestations require it today.

From what has been said, it is obvious that Jesus had a keen, intuitive perception of truth and a thorough knowledge of psychical and spiritual laws. These powers, however, do not reside primarily in the conscious mind, though some knowledge of them may be gained by that mind. They are primarily manifestations of the deeper Self within us, possessed of a profounder knowledge of Life than are we. This fact has been repeatedly exemplified in our own day, when seemingly illiterate persons have displayed a greater innate knowledge of the deeper power of life than any living biologist. This was particularly emphasized by Doctor Eugène Osty who, as the result of his laboratory experiments with a young Austrian Psychic, Rudi Schneider, says, in his *Supernormal Aspects of Energy and Matter* (pp. 38-39) :

" . . . A motor mechanic by trade and of little education, he is incapable of understanding any problem of physics, of chemistry or of biology. In a group of scientists he would fail to understand what was being said about contemporary knowledge. But if asked to perform a supernormal action . . . it is enough for him momentarily to suspend his conscious activity, for him to put himself into a special physiological state, called a trance, which endows him with exceptional powers

LOAVES AND FISHES

over matter. Then this ignorant being behaves as if he knew the intimate and primordial resources of life and processes of creation. This innate science is so inexplicable that the vast majority of men of science refuse even to listen to it. . . .

“Like the paranormal knowledge of reality in time and in space, the paranormal knowledge of the organizing processes of life reveals that behind the use of the mind in feeling, in thinking, and in acting on matter, there is another intelligent plane of being, usually not manifest, which very probably represents the fundamental reality of ourselves, and forms part of a plane of life quite different from that in which we exercise our ordinary intelligence.”

It is from this deeper, psychic source that such manifestations originate, and from it this vaster knowledge is acquired. It was with this deeper Self within Him that Christ was in communion, and from it He derived His extraordinary powers and His spiritual wisdom. On this view, Christ would represent the world's greatest psychic.

IX

THE SO-CALLED "NATURE-MIRACLES"

As we have seen, by far the greater number of the miracles attributed to Jesus were those concerned with healing in one form or another; these we shall discuss in a separate Chapter. The Nature-miracles are certainly more difficult to account for, and possible analogies are more difficult to obtain. On the other hand there are, relatively speaking, fewer of them. Aside from duplications only seven such miracles are recorded by the Evangelists. These are: stilling the tempest, feeding the multitude, the miraculous draught of fishes, walking on the sea, finding the stater, changing water to wine and cursing the fig tree. Let us briefly consider each of these in turn:

(1) *Stilling the Tempest* (Matt. 8:18-27; Mark 4:35-41; Luke 8:22-25).

A sudden storm having arisen, the disciples became thoroughly alarmed for their personal safety, and decided to awaken Jesus, who was sleeping quietly. He chided them for their lack of faith; 'rebuked' the wind and the waves, and soon thereafter the wind ceased and there was perfect peace.

It is well known that in that part of the country, sudden squalls arise and almost as suddenly die down,

LOAVES AND FISHES

and this seems to have been one of those occasions. The words attributed to Jesus when rebuking the waves were: 'Peace, be still.' Might not this remark have been addressed to *the disciples*, meaning 'where is your faith? There is no real danger; the storm will soon exhaust itself.' And when it became calm soon thereafter, the men said 'the wind and the waves obey him,' thinking that he addressed the waves, and not them. Would not this be a perfectly natural reaction on the part of ignorant fishermen; and would not the original story, as told by them, have assumed precisely the character it did by the time the Gospels came to be written many years later? We have only to compare this with many similar instances in our own day to see that some such explanation as that proposed above is perfectly capable of accounting for this well-known miracle.

(2) *Feeding the Multitude* (2 cases): Matt. 14:15-21; Mark 6:35-44; Luke 9:12-17; and (ii) Matt. 15:32-39; Mark 8:1-9.

These accounts are so similar in many respects that the question has been raised as to whether they do not refer to a single event, the latter version being merely a duplicate of the former. The location is similar and some of the details are the same. In considering this it must be remembered that the Gospel narratives were not written by a single hand but were rather compilations of earlier records, some of which were older, some newer. It is therefore quite possible that a certain amount of duplication should have occurred; the fact that there were said to be four thousand on one

LOAVES AND FISHES

occasion and five thousand on another need not disturb us, since no one counted the number present, and this is obviously only an approximate figure indicating several thousand.

In view of the above, we may consider these two accounts as one, therefore, especially since the results were so essentially similar: the multiplication of a few loaves and fishes to a number sufficient to feed the multitude on the way to the passover feast.

Several possible interpretations of this event have been offered by eminent theologians, and of these I shall mention the two which seem to me the most plausible. The first is that a greater quantity of food was found among the multitude than had been supposed. They were on their way to the passover feast, and carried their food with them. Being spiritually moved, they felt suddenly impelled to share their food with others without stint, and this combined amount more than sufficed to feed all those present, some even being left over. This emotional sweep of generosity becomes quite understandable to us when we remember the psychological differences which existed among people during the Great War, and those same individuals one year later! If such conditions as those suggested were present at the time, this most remarkable of all miracles becomes readily intelligible to us.

The second theoretical interpretation which has been suggested is that the whole account is symbolical rather than actual: the bread was not physical but spiritual, the 'bread of life.' This Jesus dispensed; the miracle represented a metaphor turned into prose. This is the

LOAVES AND FISHES

view taken by Doctor Abbott, in his *Through Nature to Christ*, p. 452. It has been shared by other eminent theologians.*

Were either of the above interpretations accepted, it will be seen that no actual miracle occurred physically; but on either view a great spiritual miracle happened, in that the hearts and souls of the multitude were opened to the reception of psychical and spiritual truths.

(3) *Jesus Walking on the Sea*: Matt. 14:22-33; Mark 6:45-52.

Various critics have pointed out the fact that when this alleged miracle occurred, the light was misty and uncertain; it was, as Mark tells us, the 'fourth watch of the night.' Further, the men themselves did not seem to have any clear idea as to the distance of the vessel from the shore, for we read that, after Christ was seen walking on the water, 'immediately the ship was at the land, whither they went.' However, the essential facts seem to be clearly stated.

That Jesus should walk upon the water is certainly no more incredible than that a man should float in the air, should be 'levitated.' Yet there are, as we know, scores of well-evidenced cases in which mystics and saints were said to have been similarly raised, while sceptical onlookers placed their hands under the body of the levitated person, and verified the fact to their satisfaction. For historical cases of this character I would refer the reader to M. Olivier Leroy's book on

* Cf. also: 'Man shall not live by bread alone, but by every word that proceedeth out of the mouth of God,' etc.

LOAVES AND FISHES

Levitation, where a surprising number of instances may be found. But it is not necessary for us to seek support from these older records; numerous modern cases have been observed by men of science in our own day—and often under excellent conditions of control. It would be possible for me to quote a number of these, but space forbids, and I must be content with one, typical of many, which illustrates the point. The account here given is by Sir William Crookes; the medium was D. D. Home, and the incident occurred in Crookes' own home in the presence of several sceptical witnesses. He says:

"The best cases of Home's levitation I witnessed were in my own house. On one occasion he went to a clear part of the room, and, after standing quietly for a minute, told us he was rising. I saw him slowly rise up with a continuous gliding movement and remain about six inches off the ground for several seconds, when he slowly descended. On this occasion no one moved from their places. On another occasion I was invited to come to him, when he rose eighteen inches off the ground, and I passed my hands under his feet, round him, and over his head when he was in the air.

"On several occasions Home and the chair on which he was sitting at the table rose off the ground. This was generally done very deliberately, and Home sometimes then tucked up his feet on the seat of the chair and held up his hands in full view of all of us. On such an occasion I have got down and seen and felt that all four legs were off the ground at the same time, Home's feet being on the chair. Less frequently the levitating

LOAVES AND FISHES

power extended to those sitting next to him. Once my wife was thus raised off the ground in her chair . . .” (*Journal S. P. R.*, Vol. VI, pp. 341-42).

If levitation of the human body be thus possible, there is no reason why Christ should not have been similarly levitated; his walking on the water would thus be merely an instance of this same power in operation.

(4) *The Miraculous Draught of Fishes*: (2 cases). Luke 5:1-11; and John 21:1-23.

The accounts given by Luke and John obviously refer to two different ‘miracles,’ since the details of the stories vary considerably. It is to be noted that each account is to be found in only one of the Synoptical Gospels, and is not referred to in any of the others. Luke’s account is not to be found in John, and *vice versa*. Neither Matthew nor Mark refers to either of them.

Neither of these ‘miracles’ can be taken very seriously, in that there does not seem to be anything very ‘miraculous’ about them when studied carefully. In Luke’s account, Simon went to Jesus, telling him that they had fished all night, with ‘no luck.’ They had caught nothing! Jesus evidently encouraged him to try again; he did so, and this time they had a good haul, so much that the net broke and they had to get others to help them.

In John’s account, the net was already out, when Jesus came to the shore, asking them if they had caught anything. They replied that they had not. So Jesus told them to cast the net on the right side of the ship. This

LOAVES AND FISHES

they did and caught 153 fish, some of which they afterwards cooked and ate. Possibly Jesus had a clairvoyant perception of the fish under the water; possibly it was coincidence or 'fisherman's luck.' In any event, were this incident given elsewhere than in the Bible, it is hardly likely that it would be considered a genuine 'miracle.' With this we may be content to leave this particular incident, and pass on to other narratives.

(5) *The finding of the Stater*: Matt. 17:24-27.

This incident is mentioned in Matthew only. Jesus and Peter had been discussing the payment of tribute, and Jesus said to Peter: ' . . . go thou to the sea, and cast an hook, and take up the fish that first cometh up; and when thou hast opened its mouth, thou shalt find a piece of money: that take, and give unto them for me and thee.'

By way of comment on this miracle, I shall merely cite the opinions of three or four earnest theologians. Ewald* points out that there is no evidence that such a fish was caught; it is nowhere stated that such *was* the case. Weiss† thinks that the fish was sold for money; and that this must be understood by the text. Bey-schlag‡ thinks that one huge fish of sufficient value was caught, the sale of which yielded the required sum. Canon Farrar, in his *Life of Christ* (ii, p. 46), states that the only impression left upon his mind is one of doubt. Similar references could be added. The upshot is that this 'miracle' can hardly be taken too seri-

* *Geschichte Christus*, p. 467.

† *Das Leben Jesu*, ii, p. 147.

‡ *Das Leben Jesu*, p. 304.

LOAVES AND FISHES

ously, but naturally falls into the same category as the miraculous draught of fishes, mentioned above.

(6) *The Change of Water into Wine.* John 2:1-11.

The account of this miracle occurs in John only; it is not mentioned by any of the other evangelists. The incident occurred at a marriage feast, where the guests had all 'drunk well.' A large quantity of water was on hand, filling six water-pots, *i.e.*, approximately 120 gallons. Mary had requested her son to perform a miracle; at first He refused abruptly, but subsequently did so. This is the earliest of all the Gospel miracles.

It would be useless for me to attempt any explanation of this alleged miracle, since I have no such explanation to offer. To be frank, it too closely resembles certain feats performed in our own day, for which a normal explanation is obvious. Ewald suggests that the story is to be taken symbolically; that the enchantment of Christ's discourse made the water *seem* to taste like wine; Beyschlag proposes mass-hypnotism, and so on. I have no analogy to offer here except one which would be out of keeping with the seriousness of our discussion.

(7) *The Cursing of the Fig Tree.* Matt. 21:17-22; Mark 11:12-14; 20-24.

Jesus perceives a fig tree on which He seeks to find figs to appease His own hunger; there are none on the tree, whereupon He curses the tree, and it withers.

The story as it stands strikes one as highly improbable, not only intrinsically but because it is entirely out of keeping with all that we know concerning Jesus.

LOAVES AND FISHES

Various symbolical interpretations have been suggested, but none of them is satisfactory. What seems much more probable is that the *parable* of the fig-tree given in Luke (13:6-9) was wrongly interpreted in the other Gospels as an actual happening, and that a story which Jesus told was subsequently confused, and made an actual incident in His life. If this interpretation be true, it would entirely exonerate Jesus from the charge of morose bad-temper which would otherwise be attributable to Him.

We have now finished with all the so-called Nature-miracles recorded in the Gospels and attributed to Jesus. I think it is plain that none of them can be considered 'miraculous,' but that all of them are natural occurrences, sometimes misinterpreted, or the accounts of them misquoted, or that they represent genuine psychic phenomena, for which analogies may be found throughout history and even in our own midst. The elements in them which bear the stamp of genuineness are not unique; similar manifestations have occurred in the presence of others, and may occasionally be witnessed in drawing-rooms in London, Paris and New York, just as they were witnessed in and about Jerusalem nearly two thousand years ago. This being so, they cannot be considered 'miracles,' in the ordinary sense of the word; were Jesus alive today, He would doubtless be the first to assert this.

It must not be thought, however, that I am in any way attempting to detract from the value of Christ's teachings, or to minimize the greatness of His psychic

LOAVES AND FISHES

and spiritual qualities. Such is by no means the case. The fact that His Nature-miracles, the accounts of which have doubtless deterred many free-thinking persons from studying the Gospel narratives at all, cannot be accepted as such, detracts not at all from the marvellous cures which He performed, the exalted character of His message, and the magnificent spirituality of His life. These we shall consider in the Chapters which follow. In them on the contrary we shall find the psychic and spiritual qualities of Jesus amply demonstrated, and the greatness of His power exemplified.

X

HIS HEALING MIRACLES CONSIDERED AS PSYCHIC PHENOMENA

WE now come to the question of the various cures which Jesus effected, aside from the cases of Demoniacal Possession, which are discussed in a separate chapter. Omitting these for the moment, therefore, we have the following list of 'miraculous' healings: cures of lepers, 2 cases; healing the blind and dumb, 5 cases; raising the dead, 3 cases; miscellaneous healings, 10 cases. This gives us a total of 20 cases. It is interesting to note that, of the 48 miracles worked by Jesus and His disciples, 40, or 83 per cent of the whole, were upon human bodies. Attention has already been called to the preponderance of the healing miracles over the others attributed to Jesus.

Let us consider these in turn, beginning with the more simple cases, and leading up to those which are more complex and difficult of explanation.

(1) *The Healing of Peter's Mother-in-law.*

Jesus had just returned from the synagogue, to find Peter's mother-in-law lying down, complaining of feverish symptoms. This was evidently a slight malady, and one of short duration, since it developed after the disciple had left his home to attend the synagogue. We are told that Christ took her by the hand, 'rebuked the

LOAVES AND FISHES

fever,' and commanded her to rise; this she immediately did, all symptoms of the fever having apparently left her.

It is hardly likely that any one today would seriously consider this a 'miracle,' since there could be quoted thousands of analogous cases in which headaches, various pains, indispositions, feverish symptoms, etc., have been instantly cured by means of suggestion. We may accordingly pass this instance over with the briefest mention.

(2) *The Curing of the Paralytic.*

This is a more interesting case. A palsied man was brought on his bed to be cured. Jesus was evidently pleased by his faith, for He said 'thy sins are forgiven thee.' At this, the Scribes and Pharisees protested, saying that this was blasphemy. Jesus asked them if it were not easier to say 'thy sins are forgiven thee' than to say, 'take up thy bed and walk.' Whereupon, suiting the action to the word, He commanded the man to arise, take his bed and walk with it into his house.

Commenting on this case, the Reverend Alexander B. Bruce (D.D.) in his work on *The Miraculous Element in the Gospels* (p. 133) says:

"In the story of the palsied man, we are asked to see yet another instance showing how the marvellous, like a snowball, grew as it rolled. Matthew simply relates that they brought to Jesus a man sick of the palsy, lying on a bed. Luke tells how the friends who carried the sick man, finding the ordinary entrance blocked by the multitude, made their way to Jesus with their burden

LOAVES AND FISHES

through an opening in the roof. Mark, finally, not content with this display of zeal, represents the friends not as entering by the roof through an opening already existing, but as expressly uncovering the roof and digging their way through to the presence of Him in whom they placed their hope."

Those who have witnessed extraordinary and almost instantaneous cases of cures of paralysis resulting from shell-shock, emotional stresses, dissociation, etc., cannot see in this incident anything truly miraculous. They perceive, on the contrary, a case analogous to these modern cures brought about by psychotherapeutic suggestion working upon a man of great faith under favorable conditions. Once the psychic origin of this and kindred states was demonstrated, it is quite easy for us to believe that this healing was a typical psychic cure, similar to innumerable other cases in our own day. It was a remarkable and fine cure, assuredly, but in no way 'miraculous' in the traditional sense of the word.

(3) *The Healing of the Withered Hand.*

This is one of the miracles of healing performed on the Sabbath, and this element of the case is emphasized by the disciples almost more than the cure itself. It was performed in the synagogue before the Scribes and Pharisees, who were so incensed in consequence that they immediately began plotting against Christ. The account tells us that Jesus commanded a man having a withered hand (a *right* hand, Peter states) to stand forth and hold it out. He does so: Jesus touches it, and immediately the hand is made whole like the other.

LOAVES AND FISHES

In view of the vagueness and lack of detail in the records, it is difficult to estimate the validity and exact nature of this cure. Keim, for instance, in his *Jesu von Nazara* (ii, 465) has suggested that this might have represented a case of rheumatism, inflammation or sprain, all ailments producing stiffness in the member. We do not know to what extent the affliction represented actual withering, or merely loss of the power of movement. If the latter, we are not compelled to consider it miraculous in any sense, as analogous modern cases might be quoted by the score.* If, however, the hand was actually withered, that would present a more serious problem, though even here somewhat similar instances of recent date could be quoted. The Gospel accounts are too abbreviated and tenuous to enable us to arrive at any decision on this matter.

(4) *The Woman with a Spirit of Infirmary.*

This account is given only in Luke. It is stated that the woman had suffered from a complaint which caused her to assume a constant stooping posture ('bent-back') for some eighteen years. Jesus laid his hands upon her, told her that she was cured, and immediately she stood upright.

Numerous cases of a similar nature are now known to medical science, and many of them have been cured—though, it must be admitted, rarely instantaneously. Where it is a case of pseudo-contracture, it is obviously psychic in its origin, and may occasionally be

* See *Shell-Shock and Other Neuropsychiatric Problems*, by E. E. Southard, M.D., containing more than a thousand pages of analogous cases.

LOAVES AND FISHES

cured by suitable suggestion, just as in the case of the bed-ridden woman who jumped from her bed and rushed from the house on the cry of 'fire,' although she had been bed-ridden for many years. Abercrombie gives us several cases of the kind. While, therefore, lacking definite records, we cannot state dogmatically that the case cured by Jesus was of this psychic nature, we are quite within our rights in thinking that it may have been, since any form of medical knowledge or scientific diagnosis was in those days impossible.

(5) *The Cure of the Dropsied Man.*

This is another of the miracles performed on the Sabbath, in the presence of lawyers and Pharisees. Details of the cure are completely lacking, the record merely stating that 'he took him and healed him.' The account is to be found in Luke only. Lacking all details, it would be useless for us even to attempt a reconstruction of the cure, the condition of the patient, or what might or might not have happened. We must be content to record this case without further comment.

(6) *The Woman with an Issue of Blood.*

This is an interesting case, narrated in Matthew, Mark and Luke. The woman had been twelve years afflicted with a woman's illness, concerning which she had doubtless been reticent. The cure, in this instance, does not seem to have been sudden, but was effected gradually. First of all it was ameliorated; later, after she had talked with Christ in private, and told Him 'all the truth,' she was completely cured. One interest-

LOAVES AND FISHES

ing incident in connection with this healing was the fact that the woman crept behind Him in the crowd, and touched the hem of His garment. Jesus immediately perceived this and said 'Somebody hath touched me; for I perceive that virtue is gone out of me.' It was as though a certain discharge of nervous energy had taken place, as it does in cases of shock, or when magnetic healing is practiced, or when a medium loses energy during a séance in which phenomena are produced. In short, there are many analogies which serve to throw light upon and in a sense interpret this interesting incident.

Medical history could furnish us with analogous, though perhaps not precisely similar, cases to that described in this account. As in so many other instances, we are handicapped by brevity and defectiveness in the records, and by our complete lack of knowledge of the actual state of affairs at the time of the cure. Making certain assumptions, the case can be explained; with that we must be content to leave it.

(7) *The Healing of the Blind Man at Jericho.*

The accounts of this miracle differ considerably in the Gospel narratives. Mark and Luke state that one blind man was healed, while Matthew states that two blind men were cured at the same time, and instantly. (Not to be confused with the other healing of the two blind men, described in Matt. 9:27-31.) No clay or spittle was used on this occasion; merely the command that they should see. How long had these men been blind? What caused their blindness? Nobody knows.

LOAVES AND FISHES

There are, as we know, cases of hysterical blindness, which have been cured by suggestion. Was this cure a case of that character? We cannot say; we only know that such cases exist and that such cures have been effected, and that these are not in any sense of the word 'miraculous.' This being so, we must be content, once again, to shelve this case and regard it as non-proved, like so many of these slightly recorded Gospel miracles.

(8) *The Healing of Malchus' Ear.*

While the other Gospels speak of the cutting of Malchus' ear, by the sword of the soldier sent to arrest Jesus, only Luke speaks of the cure: Christ touched his ear, and it was healed. It will therefore be seen that this particular miracle is not well attested, since it seems certain that the other disciples would have also noted such an incident had it occurred. Of course, it is possible that the ear was merely cut, and bleeding, and that the flow of blood was stopped suddenly. But the fact remains that none of the other Gospels contain any mention of this incident, which may have been a later interpolation. We must therefore regard this case as insufficiently substantiated by the Gospel records, and pass on to other, better-evidenced cases.

(9) *The Healing of the Impotent Man at Bethesda.*

This healing miracle has a strange and interesting setting, which incidentally gives us a vivid picture of the superstitions prevalent at the time. Clustered about a certain pool were a number of sick people of all kinds, waiting for the 'waters to move.' Current belief had it

LOAVES AND FISHES

that, at a certain season of the year, an angel descended into the pool, disturbing the water, and that whoever first entered the pool thereafter would be cured. Hence the blind, the halt and the lame were clustered together on its banks.

Among them was a man who had been bed-ridden for thirty-eight years. Jesus asked him why he did not attempt to reach the pool. The answer received was that he had no relatives who would lift him thither. Jesus then cured him, and told him to take up his bed and walk. This was another healing performed on the Sabbath, which so irritated the orthodox Pharisees.

Was this a case of psychic cure, one in which the original physical causes no longer existed, but only the mental fixation of the idea that movement was impossible? Is not this case analogous to others which have occurred within the past few years, and have been recorded in medical journals? One is tempted to suppose that it might well be so. If such be the case, we have here an instance of an interesting psychological cure, but hardly one of 'miracle.' In this it resembles so many of the other healing miracles attributed to Christ.

(10) *The Healing of One Deaf and Dumb.*

This occurred near the Sea of Galilee. A man was brought to Jesus who was deaf and who also stuttered; he was not dumb, but had an impediment in his speech. The cure in this case is very interesting; it was not instantaneous, but gradual, and the suggestions which were given were accompanied by various physical pro-

LOAVES AND FISHES

cedures. As the Reverend George B. Cutten says, in his *Psychological Phenomena of Christianity*, p. 227, in speaking of this miracle:

"Jesus takes him aside from the multitude privately, in order that He may better give the suggestions without distractions. But how is this to be done? The man cannot hear, so Jesus cannot talk to him, but yet He must give him suggestions. Jesus first put His fingers to His ears, to signify which organs He wished to be affected; then He spat and touched his tongue to draw attention to the other infirmity. He next looked up to Heaven, sighed, and said 'Ephphatha,' meaning 'Be opened.' The man, in looking, could not help knowing what Jesus said, for no word could more easily be read from the lips. The result was a cure. We could not imagine a better method of suggestion to a deaf and dumb man."

It is hardly necessary to add that both stammering and psychical dumbness have been repeatedly healed by similar methods in our own times.

(II) *The Opening of the Eyes of One Blind at Bethsaida.*

In this instance we have again a gradual cure, and no instantaneous miracle. Christ led the blind man out of the town; then, some distance away, He spat on the man's eyes, and placed His hands over them. After keeping them there for a few moments, He asked the man whether he now saw anything. The reply was, in effect, 'I see a little, very vaguely.' ('I see men as trees, walking.') Jesus then again treated his eyes, by placing

LOAVES AND FISHES

His hands over them; and the second time the man said that he could see clearly.

I should like to state that cures of this kind are the most effectual reply that could be offered to the traditional 'miraculous' elements they are supposed to represent. If Christ could heal merely by a word of command, why should He resort to measures such as these? Palpably they are brought into line with other, non-miraculous healings of like nature. Personally, I am inclined to believe that saliva possesses very remarkable healing properties of a nature as yet unknown. When one's finger is cut or bruised, is not the first impulse to place it in the mouth, and does not every animal lick its wounds? These facts have been almost totally neglected by medical men, though their significance seems obvious enough. Christ may not only have known of this remarkable curative power hidden in the 'magnetic properties' of saliva, but have utilized it in His healings on more than one occasion. At all events, the cure as recounted reads intelligibly enough, and one can quite see how it might have been effected under the circumstances.

(12) *The Healing of Two Blind Men.*

This account is given in Matthew only, and here the cures are stated to have been brought about merely by a touch and a word of command. Christ first asked them, however, whether they believed; and when they replied that they did, He said 'According to thy faith be it unto you,' and they were healed.

Inasmuch as the account of this cure is given in less

LOAVES AND FISHES

than *one line*, it is naturally difficult to estimate its validity. One can only refer to previous, general criticisms and, in lieu of a genuine and almost unique miracle, assume that in these two cases there was involved some form of psychical blindness, which suitable suggestions and 'psychical contagion' efficiently cured.

(13) *The Opening of the Eyes of One Born Blind.*

The narrative of this cure is contained in John only, occupying the major part of the ninth Chapter. The man is said to have been blind from birth. At all events, he was brought to Jesus, who proceeded to heal him. He spat upon the ground, made a sort of clay of the mixture, which He then proceeded to apply to the man's eyes. Jesus then told him to go and wash in the pool of Siloam, which he did, 'and came seeing.' Here again saliva was made use of in the cure.

If this narrative faithfully depicts the facts, we have, indeed, an extraordinary event, since it is doubtful if a case of a congenitally blind man who was made to see could be produced.* It is conceivable that the eyes were covered by a thin, membranous coating, which was removed when the sticky clay was washed and pulled away. Rare cases are on record in which operations have removed similar films. It is possible, of course, that the story is a later interpolation (such interpola-

* In Doctor Alexander Erskine's book *A Hypnotist's Case Book* (pp. 68-71), may be found recorded a case of a woman, Gertie Yates, blind from birth according to accounts, whose eye-sight was restored by hypnotic suggestion. This extraordinary case is recorded in an equally remarkable book; and, while I cannot of course vouch for its authenticity it is nevertheless evidently recorded in good faith, among other phenomenal cures. I must refer the reader to the original for verification, in connection with this case.

LOAVES AND FISHES

tions are known to exist) and that the account we have is not truly representative of the original happening. It has been suggested, also, that the whole narrative is meant to be symbolic, meaning that the man's sins were forgiven, and that he had attained 'spiritual sight,' for the sinfulness of the man's past life was repeatedly touched upon. Jesus seems to have thought that sickness and sin were synonymous, or in some mysterious manner inter-connected, and that if a man were sinless he was also well, for sickness was the result of sin. This symbolic interpretation is rendered all the more probable by the concluding paragraphs of this Chapter, which read as follows:

"And Jesus said, 'For judgment I came into the world, that they which see not might see; and that they which see might be made blind.' And some of the Pharisees which were with him heard these words, and said unto him, 'Are we blind also?' Jesus said unto them, 'If ye were blind, ye should have no sin: but now ye say, We see; therefore your sin remaineth.' "

Blindness (spiritual) and sin are here obviously considered synonymous terms, so that the man 'born blind,' and remaining so until his sins were forgiven him (*i.e.*, until he underwent conversion, when he 'saw' the folly of his ways) might well be the interpretation of this unique miracle.

(14) *The Healing of the Nobleman's Son.*

This healing is somewhat different from the others, since Jesus did not see or touch the healed person, who remained at a considerable distance from him. In mod-

LOAVES AND FISHES

ern phraseology it would represent a case of 'absent treatment.'

A nobleman living in Capernaum, whose son was very ill, sought out Jesus, hearing that he was in Cana. He begged Jesus to cure his son. At first He demurred, but later consented to do so. He said "Go thy way, thy son liveth." Later, on his return, the nobleman inquired as to the precise time when his son had taken a turn for the better. He was told that it was "yesterday at the seventh hour." This was the exact hour at which Jesus had said to him "thy son liveth." His son evidently recovered completely.

Is not this an obvious case of telepathic transfer, in which Christ cured the boy by mental suggestion? Richet, Gilbert, Liébault and others have given us very similar cases culled from their clinical note-books. The cure of the nobleman's son is, in my estimation, a splendid example of telepathic psychic cure.

(15) *The Healing of the Centurion's Servant.*

This case, also occurring in Capernaum, is very similar to the previous one. The cure was one of palsy. The two Gospel narratives vary considerably, agreeing only on the words which the centurion spoke. At all events, Jesus did not see the man, and he was cured. The meager accounts unfortunately prevent us from generalizing more fully on this case of healing.

THE LEPERS

We have now finished our summary of the miscellaneous miracles, including the cases of the healings of

LOAVES AND FISHES

the deaf, dumb and blind. Next, we come to the two recorded instances of the cure of lepers. In the first case one man was cured, and in the second case, ten. These are admittedly difficult to explain on purely naturalistic grounds provided the Gospel accounts are accurate. However, there are concerning them certain things which may be said tending to throw some light on the mystery.

In the first place, the three accounts of the first healing differ from one another on essential points. Matthew tells us that the cure was effected as Jesus 'came down from the mountain,' whereas Luke states that it occurred 'in the city.' This fact assuredly raises some doubts as to the authenticity of the account, since different places are indicated for the cure, while one would have imagined that an incident as important as this would have been most faithfully reported. Glaring inaccuracies of this character naturally raise our doubts as to the historical accuracy of the rest of the record.

Certain critics have raised the question as to whether the man was really cured. It is true that the accounts state that he was, but no verification of this is given; and of course we have to accept the statement of the disciples that the man had leprosy, which a superficial glance could hardly prove. However, these points cannot be pressed unduly.

As soon as the cure was effected, Jesus charged the man to secrecy, requesting him to 'tell no man' of his recovery, which he promptly did! Then, he was instructed to show himself to the priests in the city. Why was this? Jesus must have known that the news of the

LOAVES AND FISHES

'miracle' would have been blazed abroad, if he did so. This seems quite contrary to His desire to keep the healing a secret. Here is an obvious contradiction difficult to account for if we assume that both versions are correct.

The healing of the ten lepers is recorded in Luke only, again a most singular fact, for one would have thought, *à priori*, that an extraordinary case of this character would have been given great prominence in all the Gospel narratives. Again, the lepers were instructed to show themselves to the priests, despite the previous request for secrecy!

The question arises: Were the ten lepers really cleansed? When they first presented themselves, they stood 'afar off,' at a respectful distance. After they had departed, one of them returned, to thank Jesus for his cure. Christ asked 'were not all ten cleansed?' Then He turned to the man who had returned, and said to him 'thy faith hath made thee whole.' Does this imply that the lack of gratitude and faith on the part of the remaining nine prevented them from being cured? One might be tempted to think this a justifiable inference. The records are, as usual, so abbreviated that it would be impossible to say. If such be the case, it will be seen that Jesus cured of leprosy only two persons during the course of His public life and mission. What really happened on those occasions of course we cannot say. We must be content to leave these cases, the validity of which rests entirely upon the accuracy of the Gospel records as they have come down to us. We have seen reason to doubt this accuracy on several occasions, in-

LOAVES AND FISHES

cluding the present instances, when differing accounts of the healings themselves are to be found.

RAISING THE DEAD

We come, finally, to the three recorded instances of raising the dead: Jairus' daughter, the widow's son, and Lazarus. The first of these is reported in Matthew, Mark and Luke; the second in Luke only, and the third in John only. Again, one is tempted to ask why these latter cases should not have been mentioned by the other Evangelists, in view of their obvious importance? No answer is vouchsafed to this pertinent question.

The accounts of the first raising are in substantial agreement. The girl was thought to be dead; Jesus said "the maid is not dead, but sleepeth." He then went in alone, took the girl by the hand (spoke to her, giving her suggestions?) and the maid awoke and arose from her bed. These are the essentials of this case.

The healing of the widow's only son was under different conditions. The 'dead' man was being carried from the city on a bier. Jesus went up to the bier, touched it, and said 'Young man, I say unto thee, Arise.' The account continues, 'And he that was dead sat up and began to speak.' This is mentioned in Luke only.

The third raising is doubtless the most famous of all, and to it John devotes the major portion of Chapter 11. It is the raising of Lazarus.

Here the man had not only been pronounced dead,

LOAVES AND FISHES

but had actually been buried for four days. His grave was a cave, over the entrance of which a large stone had been placed. When told of the death of Lazarus, Jesus replied 'this sickness is not unto death'; and again, later on, 'our friend Lazarus sleepeth, but I go, that I may awake him out of sleep.' Jesus then had the stone of the tomb removed, stood at the entrance and cried in a loud voice, 'Lazarus, come forth!' Upon this the supposedly dead man walked out, still wrapped in his grave-clothes.

And now a few words of comment on these three cases. It will be observed that, in two out of the three, *Christ specifically stated that the patient was not dead*, that he was 'asleep,' doubtless meaning by this in a state of catalepsy or trance resembling death. It is hardly necessary to emphasize the fact that the signs of death are often most uncertain, and that hundreds, perhaps thousands, of persons have been buried alive and afterwards revived in their graves as shown by exhumation. Less than a hundred years ago, prizes were offered for any sure sign of death; hundreds of persons have been pronounced dead and resuscitated before burial. (This happened twice in the case of my own mother, during her early girlhood.) One has only to consult medical records to discover any number of cases of this character, and the fact itself is today so well recognized that it is unnecessary to stress the point. In view of these facts, therefore, it is assuredly unnecessary for us to assume that the subjects raised by Jesus were actually 'dead,' especially in view of the fact that

LOAVES AND FISHES

He himself stated that such was not the case. And this would apply even in the case of Lazarus, for we know that there are well-evidenced cases in which patients have remained for thirty days and longer without the slightest evidences of life, and have subsequently revived spontaneously. These cases, therefore, we cannot regard as true 'raisings from the dead,' interesting and remarkable as they doubtless are.

One or two further comments may be made in this connection. Jesus was not alone in 'raising the dead'; in this He was not unique, even according to the Biblical records. Two instances are attributed to the disciples. The emphasis placed upon both suggestion and faith are many times stressed in the narratives. Suggestions were certainly given, and the actual words used occasionally reported. These were given even in cases of 'raising the dead.' The importance of faith is emphasized over and over again: 'according to your faith be it unto you,' etc.; while in many passages it is stated that Jesus could perform no miracles 'because of their unbelief.' Almost invariably, Christ asked the sufferer regarding the extent of his faith, before undertaking to heal him. In short, certain 'conditions' were insisted upon, without which cures could not be effected. These were: faith on the part of the patient, quiet, repose, suggestibility and co-operation. These are the ideal conditions for 'faith-cure,' as any hypnotist or practitioner of psychotherapy can testify. But they are hardly what we should expect, were a series of actual 'miracles' accomplished, since these might be supposed to be successful, no matter what the conditions might be. In short, Jesus

LOAVES AND FISHES

performed His cures in accordance with scientific psychological laws: with these He worked in harmony, realizing the impossibility of attempting to work in opposition to them.* This is precisely what we should expect in the case of a great psychic healer, who intuitively recognized these laws and acted in accordance with them. Many of His healings are on any theory remarkable, and worthy of the closest study from the psychological, no less than from the historical, standpoint.

It must be understood, in conclusion, that I am far from contending that certain supernormal elements may not have entered into many of Christ's healings, as well as into the production of His other 'miracles.' This may well have been the case: even 'raising the dead' *may* be demonstrated by modern science as a clinical fact—as it is certainly a theoretical possibility. I am merely contending that such semi-miraculous elements do not seem to be necessitated, in at least the majority of cases, as the records themselves seem to prove. Making due allowance for possible interpolations and inaccuracies in the records, and taking into account the relative ignorance of the disciples, and the almost total absence of medical knowledge and accurate diagnosis in those days, and considering the brevity of the accounts and the obvious inaccuracies and disagreements between them, we may, I think, rightly conclude that the Gospel narratives do not entitle us to believe that any actual

* Indeed, the Reverend George B. Cutten (in his *Psychological Phenomena of Christianity*, p. 225 goes so far as to say: "Of the forty miracles performed by Jesus and the apostles on the bodies of men, all classes but three have been duplicated by hypnotism."

LOAVES AND FISHES

'miracles,' in the theological sense, were produced by Jesus. At the same time we can acknowledge the remarkable character of His cures, as well as the greatness of His life and the beauty of His ethical teachings.

XI

DEMONIACAL POSSESSION

THE belief in demoniacal possession is one of the oldest of which we have any record. It was more or less universal in Egypt, Babylonia, Persia, Judea, Greece and Rome. In China also so-called demon-possession is very common, even today, as Doctor Nevius has shown.* In the Middle Ages, it was associated with witchcraft, and here it often took an epidemic form. In many ways the two are definitely interblended. Among primitive peoples the belief is all but universal today, especially in Africa and North Asia, where it is closely connected with Shamanism. In Siam, South India and Ceylon it is still common. In many of these cases the demon takes the form of an animal, which is said to possess the body of the sufferer. This historic side of the subject has been treated at great length by Professor T. K. Oesterreich, in his work on *Possession: Demoniacal and Other* (1930), to which the interested reader is referred.

In the Bible, demoniacal possession is often associated with other diseases, mental and physical. Thus, in John (10:20) we read that 'he hath a devil, and is mad.' In Matthew, the father of the boy says that he has epilepsy, but the two evangelists state that he has a 'spirit.' The 'seizure' by demons is often referred to. In the New Testament, possession is frequently associated with diseases, such as dumbness, deafness, blind-

* *Demon Possession and Allied Themes*, by John L. Nevius, D.D.

LOAVES AND FISHES

ness, epilepsy, fever and insanity. It is in the light of these facts, then, that we must consider the New Testament cases of demoniacal possession.

Christ is said to have cured six cases of this character. They are listed among the traditional miracles, and consequently must be considered from that standpoint. These six are: the healing of the dumb demoniac; the healing of the lunatic boy; the healing of the demoniac in Capernaum synagogue; the healing of a demoniac (unspecified); the healing of the Canaanite woman's daughter; the healing of the demoniac of Garada. Let us consider these briefly, in turn.

(1) *The Healing of the Dumb Demoniac.*

This miracle is narrated in the tersest manner possible by both Matthew and Luke, wherein the accounts appear. Matthew says:

'And as they went out, behold, they brought to him a dumb man possessed with a devil. And when the devil was cast out, the dumb spake. . . .' (9:32-33).

Luke is equally brief (11:14):

'And he was casting out a devil and it was dumb. And it came to pass, when the devil was gone out, the dumb spake; and the people wondered.'

We can hardly consider this case evidential! All that we can glean from the record is that the man was dumb (hysterical?) and that he subsequently spoke. This instance we are compelled to pass over with the slightest reference.

LOAVES AND FISHES

(2) *The Healing of the Lunatic Boy.*

This case is given at greater length, and is referred to in three of the Gospels. The father of the afflicted boy came to Jesus, telling Him that his son was a lunatic, 'for oft times he falleth into the fire and oft into the water.' The disciples had tried to cure the boy and had failed. Thereupon Jesus 'rebuked the devil,' and 'cast him out,' and the boy was cured. The disciples asked Christ why they had been unable to cure the boy, and He replied that it was because of their lack of faith. He emphasized the necessity for prayer and fasting.

Mark states that this was a 'dumb' spirit, Matthew fails to mention this. Mark also adds that the spirit 'teareth him,' that the boy foamed at the mouth, and gnashed his teeth. Mark likewise adds further dramatic details: that when the boy was brought into the presence of Jesus he fell to the ground, foamed at the mouth, and 'wallowed.' When Jesus rebuked the possessing spirit, Mark adds yet another touch; he makes Jesus say: 'Thou dumb *and deaf* spirit, I charge thee, come out of him.' Another incident is added; that the boy thereupon appeared 'as one dead.' Thereupon Jesus took the boy by the hand, and he was led away to his house.

Luke gives two or three details not supplied by either Matthew or Mark, for he states that the spirit often bruised the body, and that he cried out suddenly. Otherwise the cure is narrated very much as in the earlier accounts.

Was the boy insane, or an epileptic, or both, or did he suffer from the persecution of a 'poltergeist,' much as

LOAVES AND FISHES

Eleonore Zügün when she was bitten and scratched, and weals raised on her body by invisible means, in the National Laboratory of Psychical Research, in London, in 1926? It would be impossible to say; but *à priori* one cannot credit the existence of the boy's 'devil' any more than one can credit the existence of Miss Zügün's 'Dracu,' which she also claimed was a devil, but which subsequent psycho-analysis banished. Nevertheless, the phenomena in this case were undoubtedly objective and supernormal, and were never adequately explained. Quite possibly the case here recorded is one of similar character, in which extraordinary phenomena occurred, though the source of these phenomena was misunderstood and misinterpreted. Or it may have been a case of psychic epilepsy. Judging from the records it is, as usual, hard to tell.

(3) *The Healing of the Demoniac in Capernaum Synagogue.*

The present example differs from the others in that a brief conversation was held between Christ and the 'possessing spirit,' before the latter was expelled. When the 'unclean spirit' was commanded to leave, he 'cried out with a loud voice'; then departed. Luke adds that, when the spirit came out of the man, he 'threw him in the midst . . . and hurt him not.' This incident is omitted in Mark.

In this case we have even less evidence to go upon than in the previous instances. Apart from the conversation, so familiar to psychic students, there is nothing to go upon in the way of proof. I am afraid we

LOAVES AND FISHES

shall have to dismiss this case of demoniacal possession with scant comment.

(4) *The Healing of a Demoniac.*

The account of this case is even briefer than the others; it is given only in Matthew, 12:22:

'There was brought unto him one possessed with a devil, blind and dumb: and he healed him, insomuch as the blind and dumb both spake and saw.'

What has been said above applies to this case also, and it would be useless to repeat general criticisms of this character. We pass on to the next recorded case.

(5) *The Healing of the Canaanite Woman's Daughter.*

In this instance, again, almost no details are given. A woman begs Christ to heal her daughter; at first He refuses, but later consents, states that the girl is cured, and the woman goes her way. Mark adds that the mother, on returning home, found the devil gone out, 'and her daughter laid upon the bed.' Beyond this statement we know nothing of the case; what ailed the girl, whether or no she was really cured, or subsequent developments. (The evidence offered in support of some of the traditional 'miracles' is obviously weak to the point of being non-existent!)

(6) *The Healing of the Demoniac of Gadara.*

The accounts of this healing differ essentially in the various gospels. Mark tells us that one demoniac was cured; Matthew says there were two. Matthew says that they came out of the tombs, 'exceeding fierce, so

LOAVES AND FISHES

that no man might pass by that way.' Mark adds that his (one) man was so strong that no chains could bind him. He further tells us that Jesus asked who was tormenting him, and the reply was 'My name is Legion.' Thereupon, the account goes, Jesus commanded the evil spirits to come out of the man, and they entered into a herd of swine (2000 of them!) and the whole herd ran down into the sea and were 'choked.' Thus the 'devils' were driven out, and when some people encountered Christ and the disciples later, they found the man sitting, clothed, at Jesus' feet, and in his right mind.

This is the last and most dramatic of the demoniac-possession cures. Even those who believe in the theoretical possibility of genuine possession would not, probably, believe that the swine were similarly possessed and committed suicide! Either the unfortunate man ran among the herd, terrifying them, or they were frightened, as herds of animals frequently are, so that they one and all rushed in a certain direction which, unfortunately for them, happened to be into the sea, just as whole herds of American buffalo used to rush pell-mell over the edge of a steep ravine. Aside from this, the man was obviously insane, this being a typical 'possession' type of insanity. Sudden and remarkable cures of this are by no means unknown.

We have now completed our résumé of the demoniacal possession cases cured by Christ and recorded in the Gospels. What may be said regarding them?

The general tendency of broad-minded critics and

LOAVES AND FISHES

clergymen today is undoubtedly to regard these so-called possession-cases as representing merely insanity, epilepsy and various psycho-physical disorders having no actual bases in fact. Probably no scientific man, and especially no medical man, today would accept these instances as representative of actual demon-possession. Recent advances in psychopathology have yielded analogous cases, which were subsequently shown to be natural in origin, and which were cured by suitable psychotherapeutic measures. Probably this view is well summed up by the Reverend George B. Cutten, in his *Psychological Phenomena of Christianity* (p. 117) when he says:

“ . . . Since we are able both to produce and cure demoniacal possession in our laboratories, it hardly seems necessary to invoke the aid of demons to furnish an explanation, especially when we can give a better one without it.”

On this view, the demoniac possession cases recorded in the New Testament would represent merely diseased states (mental and bodily) which were treated according to the prevalent ideas, and a certain number of cures effected in consequence. It is hardly necessary to say that this idea, that disease of any kind is caused by demons and that the cure consists in casting them out, held humanity in its grip until recently, and that even today we are hardly rid of it.* Among primitive peoples, as we know, it is still universally accepted.

* We still have a tendency to refer to certain diseases as though they were entities; thus, we speak of ‘catching’ a cold, ‘getting rid of it,’ etc., just as certain magical and astrological symbols are still used in medicine.

LOAVES AND FISHES

And yet, perhaps the last word has not been said upon this subject, and the materialistic science of the last generation will give place to one more tolerant and open to new possibilities. I am far from urging any return to a belief in possessing devils; that would be not only unscientific but unwholesome in its general effect upon humanity. But it is, I think, quite conceivable that such things as 'evil spirits' may exist, in the sense that incarnate 'evil spirits' certainly exist among us now, as a casual perusal of the daily papers would demonstrate! Evil men, psychopaths, certainly exist; and if it be granted that man survives the death of the body, then such 'evil spirits' may continue, and may conceivably influence men and women, abnormally susceptible to such impressions. Many sane and intelligent spiritualists believe this. Professor William James indeed went so far as to say:

"The refusal of modern 'enlightenment' to treat 'possession' as a hypothesis to be spoken of as even possible, in spite of the massive human tradition based on concrete experience in its favor, has always seemed to me a curious example of fashion in things scientific. That the demon-theory (not necessarily a devil theory) will have its innings again is to my mind absolutely certain. One has to be 'scientific' indeed to be blind and ignorant enough to suspect no such possibility . . ." (*Proceedings S. P. R.*, Vol. XXIII, p. 118).

Similarly, Professor James H. Hyslop, in his *Life After Death* (pp. 305-06) says:

"I have asserted that the explanation in this case is obsession, as it was called in the New Testament. Be-

LOAVES AND FISHES

fore accepting such a doctrine, I fought against it for ten years after I was convinced that survival after death was proved. But several cases . . . forced upon me the consideration of the question. . . . Experiments with a psychic appear to show that this was a case of spirit-obsession—with the identity of the parties affecting the subject proved. . . . The chief interest in such cases is their revolutionary effect in the field of medicine. It is probable that thousands of cases diagnosed as 'paranoia' would yield to this sort of investigation and treatment." *

On the view here suggested, then, based upon the reality of human survival, obsession by malevolent entities must be given serious consideration. This view is fully set forth in a work by Doctor Peebles, *Spirit Obsessions*, while at least two physicians in America alone are treating obsession cases along these lines (Doctors Carl Wickland and Titus Bull). Josephus (7, Ch. 6) tells us specifically that the 'demons' of his day were to be regarded as 'evil spirits,' just as the 'Holy Ghost,' on this view, would represent the 'Spirit of Goodness' or 'beneficent spirits.' There is much that might be said upon this subject; but I shall not press it unduly. It is my belief, however, that in view of the possibility of survival and contact with our world, an open mind should at least be maintained upon this question of possible obsession. And if this be possible at one stage of the world's history it is possible at another. But,

* See *Bulletin* VI of the Boston S. P. R., wherein two cases of apparent 'paranoia' were cured, by semi-spiritistic procedures, by Doctor W. F. Prince, after all other methods had failed.

LOAVES AND FISHES

even granting this possibility, the Biblical narratives would again cease to be unique, since analogous cases are constantly being reported today. Once again, therefore, we find that psychic phenomena supply us with the key to the mystery, and enable us to understand the possible characteristics of certain well-known historic phenomena.

XII

"SPEAKING WITH TONGUES" AND THE PSYCHIC POWERS OF THE APOSTLES

IN the Acts of the Apostles, in the various Epistles, and in Revelation, may be found accounts of a large number of psychic phenomena, some of them of extreme interest. While some of these represent various 'spontaneous' phenomena, many of them are 'miracles' performed by the Apostles, quite analogous to those performed by Christ. It would be impossible to treat all these at the length they deserve, but a brief summary of the more important of them will at least serve to illustrate their similarity not only to the Gospel miracles, but to kindred manifestations today.

Let us consider, first of all, the account of the Pentecost phenomena, as given in Acts 2:1-4. This account is of such importance that it should be quoted in full:

"And when the day of Pentecost was fully come, they were all with one accord in one place. And suddenly there came a sound from heaven as of a rushing, mighty wind, and it filled all the house where they were sitting. And there appeared unto them cloven tongues like as of fire, and it sat upon each of them. And they were all filled with the Holy Ghost, and began to speak with other tongues, as the Spirit gave them utterance. . . ."

LOAVES AND FISHES

This ability to speak in foreign languages is technically known as 'glossolalia.' The Reverend George B. Cutten has written a very interesting work upon this subject,* in which he treats of the New Testament cases, of those which occurred in the church of Edward Irving, of those among the Little Prophets of the Cevennes, and of other instances both in sacred and profane history. Doctor Cutten divides these manifestations into various sub-heads, as follows:

(1) Inarticulate sounds, imperfect utterances, or some other simple vocal sounds which are noted in many glossolalics, especially at the beginning of their automatism.

(2) Pseudo-language, or articulate sounds which simulate words (probably the most common variety of speaking with tongues).

(3) Manufactured or coined words (also fairly common).

(4) Normal language, known to the subject.

(5) Foreign language, unknown to the subject (supposedly). To which might be added:

(6) Cases in which genuine, supernormal information is given.

Examples of all these various types are plentiful, and may be found scattered throughout psychological and psychic literature. In the majority of cases there are uttered meaningless jumbles, which are sometimes thought to be 'interpreted,' either by the subject himself or by others. This ability to interpret glossolalic utterances is also mentioned in the New Testament,

* *Speaking with Tongues*. Yale University Press, 1927.

LOAVES AND FISHES

though it does not seem to be regarded so highly as the ability to speak in tongues. In certain psychic cases such as in the communications of reputable mediums, it should be noted that languages which were certainly unknown to the medium have been spoken, and quite fluent conversations carried on between the sitter and the alleged Entity communicating at the time, though there is no evidence in the New Testament narratives that such was the case.

The descending 'tongues of fire' have been seen by many clairvoyants, and may in fact have been objective 'psychic lights,' so often observed in séances. The 'rushing, mighty wind' has been similarly noted on many occasions, and of late years the reality of this has been tested in modern laboratories by the aid of self-registering thermometers and delicate instruments of precision. In short, every detail of the Pentecost narrative is doubtless true, and similar phenomena have become intelligible and explicable to us by reason of the recurrence of identical phenomena in our own times.

There are numerous instances of *Clairaudience* in the New Testament, in which was heard a 'voice' imparting instruction or giving information unknown to the recipient. These are very similar to one another, and hardly worth quoting in detail. For examples of these, see Matt. 17:5; John 12:28-30; Acts 7:30-31; Acts 9:4-7 and Acts 9:7-9, etc.

A case of 'transfiguration' is given in Matt. 17:1-5, in which the face of Jesus 'did shine as the sun,' just as the face of Moses was said to shine after his return from Mount Sinai. Analogous cases of 'trans-

LOAVES AND FISHES

figuration' have occurred within the past few years, and have been carefully observed by scientific men. I have referred to these cases elsewhere, and many others of similar character might be quoted.

Many 'visions' are given, and much symbolic visional material, such as the Revelation of St. John, the temptation of Jesus by the devil, after His fasting in the wilderness, etc. These are of course analogous to similar recent cases which are now familiar to any student of the subject. In this connection it might be interesting to point out the close similarity between chapter 13, of John's Revelation, and the seventh chapter of Daniel; the visions were much the same and the language used in describing them was almost identical in several passages. Might Daniel have been instrumental in the 'inspiration' of these passages?

Numerous cases of psychic healing are given in the New Testament accounts. In Acts 3:2-8, Peter cures a lame man; in Acts 5:16, 'many' were said to have been cured; in Acts 9:33-34, Peter cures one sick of the palsy; and in the same chapter, 37-42, Peter raises Dorcas from the dead; in Acts 14:8-11, Paul cures a lame man; in Acts 28:8, Paul healed the father of Publius who 'lay sick of a fever and a bloody flux'; and so on. One or two interesting instances may also be noted of the 'transference of healing power,' similar to the 'transference of power' noted in the cases of certain mediums and psychics today.

Peter's method of healing, on at least some occasions, is obviously hypnotic. In the case of the lame beggar, the account tells us that Peter fastened his eyes on him

LOAVES AND FISHES

and commanded him to look at them. The record says that 'he gave heed to them'; after that Peter took him by the hand and gave him an abrupt command: 'In the name of Jesus Christ of Nazareth, Walk!' The man rose and walked. Paul repeats this method very closely in the case of the lame man at Lystra.

In Acts 9:3-17, may be found the account of Saul's conversion, a typical psychic experience. In verse 7, a 'voice' is heard clairaudently.

A splendid account of the various possible 'spiritual gifts' is given in I Cor. 12:4-11, and further elaborated in the same chapter, verses 27-31. In the same book, 14:29-31, the proper method of giving suitable 'messages' is clearly described.

In I Thess. 5:19-21, we are told: 'quench not the spirit; despise not prophesyings; prove all things; hold fast that which is good.' In John 4:1, we are told to 'try the spirits, whether they are of God.' John's symbolic visions conclude the New Testament.

Enough has been said, perhaps, to indicate the number of passages in the New Testament, aside from the Gospels, which contain references to psychic phenomena. All of these, viewed in the light of modern scientific investigations, become intelligible to us, and substantiate the accounts, which had previously been subjected to sceptical criticisms, or had been rejected altogether as impossible and inconceivable. In this sense, therefore, it will be seen that, so far from minimizing and destroying the Bible miracles, our conception of them as genuine psychic manifestations tends to accredit and substantiate them, and to vindicate the his-

LOAVES AND FISHES

toric accuracy of many passages which modern criticism has tended to eliminate as unhistorical and untrustworthy. Assuredly, no sincere follower of Christ's teachings can object to this.

XIII

THE RESURRECTION OF JESUS AS A PSYCHIC PHENOMENON

UNTIL almost our own generation, vast numbers of men and women believed in a literal bodily resurrection for all humanity at the 'trump of doom.' Nowadays, it is probably true that hardly any one believes in this, save a few extremists. The general popularization of physiological knowledge and all branches of science has demonstrated the impossibility of any such occurrence, and the word 'resurrection,' when it is used at all, is today applied solely to Christ's particular case. Outside of the Church service it is hardly ever mentioned save perhaps in theological seminaries, though it was once a subject of all-absorbing interest and controversy. Serious discussion of this problem is now limited to one great historic event: the resurrection of Jesus.

Yet it is obvious that the early Christians based their belief very largely upon this (to them) essential fact. In his first Epistle to the Corinthians (15: 13-14) Paul said:

'But if there be no resurrection of the dead, then is Christ not risen: And if Christ be not risen, then is our preaching vain, and your faith is also vain.'

In the broadest sense, it is obvious that the resurrection of Jesus was a psychical occurrence—whatever else it may have been; so we have, to begin with, this inter-

LOAVES AND FISHES

esting fact: *that Christianity is founded, not upon the life or teachings of Christ, but upon a psychical phenomenon!*

The accounts of the resurrection differ considerably in the four Gospels. Matthew tells us that Jesus was placed in the tomb, the door sealed by means of a huge stone, and a guard of soldiers stationed outside to watch it. About dawn, on the Sabbath, the two Marys came to the tomb, 'and behold, there was a great earthquake; for the angel of the Lord descended from heaven and came and rolled back the stone from the door, and sat upon it.' He was clothed in a white garment, and his face shone. He spoke to the women, told them that Christ had risen, and showed them that the sepulchre was empty. They were bidden to tell this fact to the disciples; on their way to do so, they were met by Jesus, who greeted them, and told them that He would appear to the disciples in Galilee. They accordingly went there, 'and when they saw him they worshipped him: but some doubted' (17). Jesus then told them to preach the word to all nations, and seemingly departed.

In Mark's account, Salome accompanied the two Marys, and when they reached the sepulchre they found the stone already rolled away. Entering the sepulchre they discovered a young man (an 'angel'), who addressed them in much the same manner as narrated by Matthew. Nothing is said in Mark's version of Christ's appearance to the women as they fled in fear from the tomb; on the contrary it is stated that He appeared to Mary Magdalene the next day. She then told the others of her experience, but they did not believe her. Subse-

LOAVES AND FISHES

quently two others saw Jesus, and so reported, but they also were not believed. Finally, He appeared to all the eleven as they sat 'at meat,' and instructed them to go forth and teach, as before.

In Luke, not only the women visited the sepulchre 'but certain others with them.' They found the stone rolled away from the entrance. Upon entering the tomb they at first saw nothing, save that the body was gone, but soon perceived two young men 'in shining garments' who told them that Jesus was no longer there (had 'risen'). They then returned and told the eleven what had occurred, 'and their words seemed to them as idle words, and they believed them not' (24:11). Luke makes no mention of the appearance to Mary, or to the others, as narrated in Matthew and Mark. On the other hand, he gives us an account of two of the disciples meeting on the road a young man, who had never heard of Jesus; whereupon they told him the details of his life and death. To this the young man responded: 'Ought not Christ to have suffered these things, and to enter into his glory?' (24:26). They continued their journey, finally supping in the village, continuing the discussion even during the meal. Suddenly, however, 'their eyes were opened, and they knew him; and he vanished out of their sight.' They thereupon concluded that the young man in question was Jesus; they at once returned to Jerusalem, where they told the others that Christ had indeed risen, since he had appeared *to Simon!* (34). As they were telling all this, Jesus appeared in their midst, showed them His hands and feet, and sat down and supped with them. He then in-

LOAVES AND FISHES

structed them to preach, 'after power had been given them,' walked with them as far as Bethany, where He blessed them and vanished.

John's version differs in many ways from the others. In this, Mary Magdalene alone went to the sepulchre where she found the stone rolled away from the entrance. She did not enter the tomb at all, but ran quickly to tell Simon Peter and another disciple that the body had evidently gone, since the door was opened. They ran together to the entrance of the sepulchre, and the two men entered and found it empty; but Mary 'stood without' (20:11). She was weeping bitterly but, happening to raise her tear-stained face, she beheld within two young men in shining white garments; they spoke to her, telling her that Christ had 'risen.' Evidently the two men inside the tomb saw nothing save the clothes, and that the tomb was empty. Mary then turned around, and saw a man standing behind her, whom she took to be the gardener; he asked her what she was seeking. She told him, and a conversation ensued, in which certain statements were made which she interpreted to mean that Jesus Himself was addressing her. She thereupon told the others what she had seen and heard.

In brief, Matthew says that the angel who was sitting upon the stone on the outside of the sepulchre told the two Marys that Christ was risen, and that the women went away quickly. Mark says that the women, upon seeing the stone rolled away and wondering at it, went into the sepulchre, and that it was the angel sitting within on the right side, who told them so. Luke

LOAVES AND FISHES

says it was the two angels that were standing up; and John says that the two angels were sitting, one at the head, the other at the feet, and that it was Jesus Christ Himself who told it to Mary Magdalene, and that she did not go into the sepulchre, but only stooped down and looked in.

That same evening Jesus appeared to all the disciples; He showed them His hands and his feet, spoke to them and blessed them. Thomas was not there on that occasion, and expressed his scepticism when the others told him what they had seen, saying that he would only believe if he could place his hands in the wounds.

Eight days later Jesus again appeared to them, and this time Thomas was present. He said to Thomas: 'Reach hither thy finger, and behold my hands; and reach hither thy hand, and thrust it into my side: and be not faithless, but believing.' Thomas apparently did this, and was convinced. Thereafter Jesus seemingly disappeared.

Some time later, Jesus again showed Himself to certain of the disciples at the sea of Tiberias, and it was on this occasion that the second 'miraculous draught of fishes' occurred, under the direction of the spirit-Jesus. As the account reads, however, the disciples did not recognize Him, for they asked 'Who art thou?' It goes on to state, to be sure, that they did not dare ask this, 'knowing it was the Lord.' This was the third and last time that Jesus appeared after His death, according to John.

It is far from my intention to enter into any detailed

LOAVES AND FISHES

discussion of the historicity and evidential value of the Gospel records. But, in examining the accounts which have come down to us, it is only natural that careful comparisons should be made, in an endeavor to discover what the actual historical facts were. Let us compare the four available accounts, and see first of all wherein they agree and wherein they differ. Having discovered the essential factual material, we may then be in a better position to estimate its character and historical validity.

If we compare the four Gospel narratives for essential similarities and differences, we find that the fundamental points upon which they all more or less agree are the following:

The sepulchre was sealed by a large stone.

That this stone was found removed when the tomb was visited.

The body was gone, only some clothing remaining. One or more young men were inside, who told the visitors that Christ was no longer there.

Jesus was seen by several different persons, soon after His death, in various places.

He appeared to all eleven disciples, showing His hands and feet to them.

They were told to preach the Gospel to various nations.

The points on which there are considerable disagreements—one version being given in one Gospel and another in another—are the following:

LOAVES AND FISHES

That a guard of soldiers had been set to watch the tomb.

That an Angel rolled back the stone guarding the entrance, and sat on it, whereas the others all say that the stone was found already removed when the sepulchre was first visited.

That an earthquake accompanied the rolling away of the stone.

The personnel of the visitors differs essentially; in Matthew it was the two Marys; in Mark the two Marys and Salome; in Luke 'several others' also; and in John, Mary Magdalene alone, who afterwards called two disciples.

What was said to have been seen inside the sepulchre also differs; no young man was seen, in Matthew, as he was in Mark; in Luke two young men were found; in John two young men inside and one outside.

Matthew tells us that Mary saw Jesus on her way back from the sepulchre; no mention of this occurs in Mark, Luke or John.

In Matthew, Jesus was seen in Galilee; no mention is made of this in Mark, Luke or John.

Mark tells us that Jesus appeared to Mary Magdalene the next day; no mention of this is made in Matthew, Luke or John.

According to Mark, two others saw Jesus later; no such account is to be found in Matthew, Luke or John.

Luke tells us of the young man whom they met on

LOAVES AND FISHES

the road, who discoursed with them, and supped with them, being only 'recognized' just as he disappeared. This account is not to be found in Matthew, Mark or John.

Mark, Luke and John all tell of the appearance of Christ to all eleven disciples in the evening, when He showed them his hands and feet. No mention is made of this in Matthew. Luke says that He ate with them; this is not found in the accounts given in Mark and John.

In Luke, it is said that Christ met and walked with certain of them to Bethany, where He disappeared. This is not stated in Matthew, Mark or John.

John says that eight days later Jesus appeared to all, showed His hands and feet, and told Thomas (who doubted) to touch them. This is not mentioned in Matthew, Mark or Luke.

In John, Jesus subsequently appeared on the shore of the Sea of Tiberias, where He told them to cast the net for the second 'miraculous draught of fishes.' This is not mentioned in Matthew, Mark or Luke.

(See Chart on pp. 172-173)

Let us analyze these accounts a little more fully.

On at least four occasions there was seen an obviously flesh-and-blood man, who talked, walked, and supped with the disciples. On none of these occasions did this person bear any exterior resemblance to Christ; Mary Magdalene took him to be the gardener; two of

LOAVES AND FISHES

the disciples met a man who talked and ate with them, an obvious stranger, who knew nothing about the death of Christ and asked them about it; the man who walked with certain of the disciples to Bethany bore no resemblance to Christ, and they did not think it was he until he had left them; the man on the shore of the Sea of Galilee was again not recognized, and this fact was stated. It would therefore appear quite obvious, from the accounts themselves, that various strangers were involved, and that the disciples merely *assumed* that these were appearances of Christ because of the character of the discourse, and perhaps the odd manner of the disappearances.

The serious discrepancies in the records, on matters of highly important fact, should at least give us pause before accepting the more miraculous elements in the accounts. One would think that there should at least be some agreement, between them, as to who visited the sepulchre and what happened there; whether an earthquake occurred and whether or not the stone was found rolled away when they visited it; whether one or two young men were found inside; whether they were sitting or standing; and whether or not Christ really ate with the disciples when He showed them His hands and feet. Yet on all these points there is absolute disagreement. The appearance on the shore of the Sea of Tiberias can hardly be connected with Christ at all; nor can the cases in which living men talked, walked and ate with the disciples, but were unrecognized by them during several hours of intimate association, and only *assumed* by them to be Jesus afterwards.

LOAVES AND FISHES

COMPARATIVE STATEMENTS

MATTHEW	MARK	LUKE	JOHN
Tomb sealed by stone.	Tomb sealed by stone.	Tomb sealed by stone.	Tomb sealed by stone.
Guard of soldiers.	No mention.	No mention.	No mention.
An angel rolled back the stone and sat on it.	Stone already rolled away.	Stone already rolled away.	Stone already rolled away.
An earthquake.	No mention.	No mention.	No mention.
Two Marys came to the Tomb.	Two Marys and Salome.	Two Marys and "several others" also.	Mary Magdalene alone.
Told by angel seated on the stone that Christ had risen, etc. (No angel within.)	They entered, and there saw young man who told them. (Angel seated on right side.)	Saw nothing at first but the robes; then <i>two</i> young men standing up who told them that Christ had gone.	Did not enter; ran back to tell Simon Peter and one other. <i>They</i> entered, but saw no form—only the robes. Mary saw (seated) forms from outside; then turned, and beheld a man standing behind her—unrecognized, but subsequently assumed to be Jesus, from his conversation.
Met Jesus on way back to tell disciples.	No mention.	No mention.	No mention.
Jesus seen in Galilee.	No mention.	No mention.	No mention.
No mention.	Appeared to Mary Magdalene the next day.	No mention.	No mention.

LOAVES AND FISHES

COMPARATIVE STATEMENTS—Continued

MATTHEW	MARK	LUKE	JOHN
No mention.	Two others saw Jesus later.	No mention.	No mention.
No mention.	No mention.	Met young man on the road, who supped with them and discoursed. Unrecognized; he vanished as they seemed to recognize him.	No mention.
No mention.	Appeared to all eleven, as they supped; did not eat himself.	Appeared to all; showed his hands and feet, and ate with them.	Appeared to all; showed hands and feet; did not himself eat.
No mention.	No mention.	Walked with them to Bethany, where he disappeared (?).	No mention.
No mention.	No mention.	No mention.	Eight days later, appeared; showed hands and feet, and told Thomas to touch him, and place his fingers on his hands and feet.
No mention.	No mention.	No mention.	Appeared on Sea of Tiberius—unrecognized by them; told the fishers to cast net, for second! 'miraculous draught of fishes.'
Disciples told to preach to all nations.	Disciples told to preach to all nations.	Disciples told to preach to all nations.	Disciples told to preach to all nations.

LOAVES AND FISHES

Discounting these disagreements and elaborations, therefore, what remains of the evidence for Christ's resurrection? Three essential elements. These are:

- (1) The fact that the body was gone.
- (2) The fact that Jesus appeared to various persons, at various times, during the days immediately following His death.
- (3) The appearance of Christ to the disciples, when Thomas was told to touch Him and verify for himself that a really substantial body stood before him.

A few words on each of these should not be amiss.

(1) That Christ's body had disappeared from the sepulchre, when it was visited by Mary and others the next morning cannot be doubted; all four Gospels agree as to this. But had it in truth been physically resurrected? The stone had been removed from the entrance some time before, and one or more young men were seated inside, who told the visitors that the body was gone. Might not the Greek word 'risen' mean 'taken away'? Matthew specifically tells us that the priests accused the disciples of having stolen the body, and that 'this is commonly reported among the Jews until this day' (28:15). It is true that the account, as given in Matthew, resembles what we should call a 'frame-up,' and that no one really knew what happened to the body or how it had disappeared. Loving Jesus as they did, it would appear quite reasonable to suppose that the disciples really did visit the sepulchre during the night, rolled away the stone, removed the body and

LOAVES AND FISHES

gave it reverent burial. This would in no sense detract from the sincerity of the disciples, but, on the contrary, would show their devotion to Jesus. Many others have since been prompted to similar actions. At all events this is nowhere denied in any of the Gospel narratives, as one might expect had the disciples really been indignant at the accusation. Their rescue of the precious, wounded body would be only natural in view of the importance which Orientals attach to death and everything connected with it. This, if true, would give us a perfectly natural and rational reason for the disappearance of Christ's body, and would also supply us with a motive for its rescue by the disciples.

(2) The appearances of Christ to various persons during the days immediately following His death would all be intelligible to us if we supposed them to be a series of apparitions, 'phantasms of the dead.' Many similar instances occurring in our own day could be given. The fact that more than one person saw the figure at the same time is not more wonderful than analogous cases, constantly reported, in which the same thing has occurred in haunted houses, several persons seeing the phantom at the same instant, and so reporting. The wounds in the hands and feet of Christ, shown to identify Himself to the doubting disciples, find parallels in modern cases, in which a wound on the head or a scar on the cheek is similarly displayed as evidence of identity. In one incident reported, a bleeding wound on the chest is pointed to by the phantom form, who seemingly spoke and told the percipient that he had been wounded in storming a fortress and had just

LOAVES AND FISHES

died. In another case the apparition seemed to be dripping with water; he had just been drowned. And so on. These phantasms, in short, behaved precisely as the phantasm of Christ behaved in calling attention to the wounds in His hands and feet as identificatory evidence of His presence and His continued active interest in terrene affairs. Now that the nature and genesis of these apparitions is better known to us, it is no stretch of the imagination to believe that Christ's *post-mortem* manifestations were precisely similar, and that they also represented a series of apparitions which were perceived by the disciples and by those clearly *en rapport* with Christ.

(3) There remains the most extraordinary account of all; the occasion on which Jesus manifested Himself to all eleven of the disciples, and told Thomas to touch Him and place his fingers upon the wounds in His hands and feet. It is true that we are not told that Thomas actually did so; instead he said 'My Lord and my God!' Many men have uttered similar ejaculations today, when they first saw some striking psychical phenomenon which struck them as genuine: they too have exclaimed 'My God!' Thomas was evidently convinced by the manifestation, as were the others, and his previous scepticism was overcome.

I shall not now stop to consider the varied criticisms of this particular miracle which have been advanced, partially valid though some of these doubtless are. This story is to be found in John alone, which is a later and less reliable Gospel than the others, and it seems incredible that this striking incident should not have been

LOAVES AND FISHES

mentioned by the others, if it actually occurred as stated. The fact that this incident is not even mentioned by the other disciples, and especially by Matthew who was a friend and contemporary of Christ; the fact that there is some evidence that this was a later interpolation, incorporated many years afterwards, when the original witnesses were all dead—these and similar criticisms I shall not stress. For our present purposes we may, I think, accept John's account as truthful and accurate; the incidents may have occurred just as narrated. What then? We should have a case of *materialization*, precisely analogous to cases which have been reported by eminent men of science in our own day. There are instances in which definite physiological structures have been noted; these disintegrate and dissolve into that Nothingness whence they originally emanated, leaving no visible trace behind. Were this theory true, it would enable us to account for the otherwise incredible incident narrated by John, and permit us to accept the validity and truthfulness of the Gospel record which might otherwise be called into question. We should have, in short, a vindication of this remarkable occurrence, which would otherwise be rejected *in toto* by sceptical critics.

It is true that we do not even yet understand the innermost process of materialization, and there is much profoundly mysterious connected with it. But important steps have been taken towards an interpretation of this phenomenon which, as elsewhere pointed out, is now being seriously studied by men of science under the head of 'supernormal biology.' The point I wish to

LOAVES AND FISHES

emphasize is that this incident, connected with the resurrection of Christ, is not unique; it does not stand alone, but is analogous to similar phenomena which are being observed and studied by scientists in their own laboratories today. It does not furnish us with proof of the physical resurrection of Jesus, but it does furnish us a remarkably interesting case of psychical phenomena.

Once more, therefore, we see that the story of the resurrection of Jesus, shorn of its historical inaccuracies, does not furnish us with any truly miraculous event; it does, however, supply us with a profoundly significant psychical record, which renders intelligible and acceptable to us the existent accounts of Christ's resurrection.

XIV

THE FUTURE LIFE IN THE LIGHT OF PSYCHIC SCIENCE

No question has ever stimulated the hopes, fears, anticipations, and imaginations of mankind to the same extent as this one of a possible future life. From the earliest dawn of civilization we find speculations and teachings regarding it; they are strikingly similar in some respects, diametrically opposed in others. Many summaries of these varying views have been published, a useful popular epitome being that of Louis Elbé: *The Future Life in the Light of Ancient Wisdom and Modern Science*.

In the majority of these religious teachings, the human personality is preserved in some form, but in the majority of the Oriental doctrines there is postulated a form of absorption into some Absolute Consciousness in which the sense of personal identity is lost. This idea seems acceptable to the Eastern mind, but it is usually rejected by the Western as being a form of survival hardly worth while. We shall discuss these views a little later, though this book is not the place to deal with them at the length they deserve.

The world is at present in a state of anarchy and confusion such as it has never known before. Old beliefs have fallen like old dynasties, and nothing seems to

LOAVES AND FISHES

have taken their place. Yet the world is hungry for some guiding principle, for some definite assurance that life is not lived in vain and that there is some meaning and destiny to life itself. Scepticism has undermined the older creeds, and with them has gone the spiritual uplift which they furnished. Yet nothing positive and constructive has been offered to take the place of these traditional views, to fill the vacuum created by their loss. Humanity desires some positive belief, some assurance based upon more than mere tradition and faith. It is doubtless because of this that so many people have turned to Cults of all kinds, Oriental, mystical, etc., in an endeavor to satisfy this inner want. It is also because of this that so many visit fortune-tellers and fraudulent mediums of all kinds, hoping to gain thereby some definite assurance. Lacking discrimination and scientific training of any kind, they have naturally been misled and duped on many occasions; it is these unfortunates, constituting the credulous, uncritical *hoi-polloi*, who have brought discredit upon a set of facts and a philosophy of the utmost significance and importance, and have encouraged the perpetuation of the most seamy side of a nefarious trade.

But this deep craving on the part of humanity for some definite life-philosophy, and for some proof of a life hereafter, is not to be denied; if some assurance of this kind be potentially obtainable, then mankind will continue its search, confident that proof will ultimately be secured, and hopeful that it may be in our own lifetime so that we may reap the practical benefit of these discoveries!

LOAVES AND FISHES

And if we never search, assuredly we shall never find. We cannot sit down and wait for the good things of life to fall into our laps; they never will, for persistent striving is necessary. No man ever became a violin virtuoso over night; it required years of laborious study, and many disappointments and failures, before success was ultimately attained. Similarly, if we wish to learn the inner meaning of life and its possible destiny, we must study and experiment for ourselves. No man can supply us the Truth ready-made, nor has any man a monopoly upon truth. Knowledge of reality is largely evolved from within ourselves, but we must 'till the soil,' so that the seeds of wisdom planted therein may 'sprout.' We must read, study, investigate, observe; on the other hand, we must heed the inner promptings, and open wide the door for interior impressions and intuitions. Only by a judicial blending of these may any form of Truth be finally evolved, any clear discernment of the destiny and problems of life attained.

Nothing, perhaps, cuts us off from Reality so completely as vanity and smug self-assurance. The man or woman who 'knows it all' is rarely to be trusted; their firm convictions are almost invariably wrong. Humbleness, tolerance and open-mindedness, the very virtues so often stressed by Jesus, are assuredly necessary before any cohesive grasp of life is possible, and before any meaning can be perceived in life itself.

The extreme sceptic is often one notoriously lacking in these essential values. Convinced that his closely knit, mechanistic Universe is the correct one and repre-

LOAVES AND FISHES

sents the ultimate truth, he closes his mind to all other possibilities, even to those of future revolutionary discoveries in science, which may modify or altogether negate the views held in his own day. Examples of this we have seen over and over again. What could have been more firmly established, seemingly, than the great laws of the indestructibility of matter and the conservation of energy, both of which dominated the minds of scientific men during the last century? And have we not seen one of them, at least, first questioned and then completely discredited? We should be made to realize that we are only now emerging from the childhood of the race. We know but little; there is yet much to be discovered, much to be learned. As Professor William James has so forcibly reminded us*:

‘ . . . An audience of some five or six score people, if each person in it could speak for his own generation, would carry us away to the black unknown of the human species, to days without a document or a monument to tell their tale. Is it creditable that such a mushroom knowledge, such a growth overnight as this, *can* represent more than the minutest glimpse of what the universe will really prove to be when adequately understood? No! Our science is a drop, our ignorance a sea. Whatever else is certain, this at least is certain: that the world of our present natural knowledge *is* enveloped in a larger world of *some* sort of whose residual properties we at present can have no positive idea.’

And Newton himself said: ‘To myself I seem to have been as a child playing on the seashore, while the

* *The Will to Believe*, etc., pp. 53-54.

LOAVES AND FISHES

immense ocean of Truth lay unexplored before me.'

The spiritual realm must doubtless be discovered and discerned by laws governing such discernment; these laws are in all probability in part inwardly apprehended, and in part objectively learned. That there are laws as concrete and absolute as those of physical and chemical science no serious student of this subject can doubt. The more deeply we penetrate this mysterious region, this borderland between life and death, between mind and matter, the more extraordinary and significant do these psychical and spiritual phenomena become; the nearer do we seem to approach Reality. The nearer we come to an appreciation of this ideal, the more peaceful and meaningful does life become.

It should perhaps be emphasized that the resurrection of Jesus was regarded by the disciples as proof positive of a future life, and as concrete evidence of man's survival. Sceptics existed in those days as do they in ours; and while men subscribed to the formal teachings of the church, many of them remained inwardly unconvinced, and their ideas must necessarily have been hazy and confused. This mental muddle of belief plus scepticism we find in our own day, and seems to be a common phenomenon. Men are shocked by any infringement of orthodox theological conceptions, by the idea, let us say, that a 'spirit' can joke or poke fun at his interlocutor. At the same time, they order their lives upon a purely materialistic basis, governed entirely by economic and practical contingencies; they seemingly have little regard for the possible consequences of their actions, nor are they governed by any

LOAVES AND FISHES

high spiritual ideal. Is not this a paradoxical incongruity? Is this our ideal of a consistent, rational life, based upon clear thinking and sound ethical principles?

The disciples doubtless realized the far-reaching consequences which would ensue upon any clear-cut proof of survival; to their minds this proof had been abundantly established by the series of psychic manifestations which had been noted immediately following Christ's death. They felt that they had seen, heard, touched and conversed with their beloved master; so convinced were they that no argument and no persecution could shake them. They felt it their duty to preach this great truth to the world, in an endeavor to convince others also. Contempt, disbelief and even martyrdom could not swerve them from this great ideal.

But it is to be observed that this unwavering conviction was due to their having observed a series of psychic manifestations, which to their minds conclusively proved survival. No mere ethical teachings could have stirred them to the same degree. Had it not been for the manifestations and the seeming resurrection of Christ, no such band of ardent enthusiasts could have been formed; Christianity would have died a natural death shortly after the crucifixion of its founder, and no such religion would have been known to our modern world. It was the resurrection of Christ and its seeming proof of His continued survival which so deeply impressed the disciples and converted them from a collection of sincere admirers into a band of fiery proselytes. But this was due solely to the manifestations attendant upon and following Christ's death. A series

LOAVES AND FISHES

of psychic phenomena, and they alone, may be held to be the true origin and basis of Christianity.

One can quite see, then, the tremendous importance which the disciples attributed to this (to them) unique phenomenon. If this were true, then the spirit of man was immortal, and demonstrably so; this great truth should be spread to the far corners of the earth. This they endeavored to do in the various Epistles. They preached 'Christ risen.' They essayed to prove the fact of survival and the continuity of life; in an age of faith, their conviction in turn convinced countless thousands of the human race. It continues to convince countless thousands in our own day. And we, who live in a sceptical age, may perhaps obtain similar conviction by reason of these self-same facts.

The resurrection of Jesus thus symbolically represents the spiritual rejuvenation and ultimate attainment of perfection by the whole human race. From this standpoint, it represents the greatest psychic event in all history.

But, from the point of view of the psychic student who believes in survival, this event, though fundamental, is by no means unique. He believes that immortality is assured to every member of the human race; he both desires and believes in such immortality for himself. It may be said, of course, that 'the wish is father to the thought'; but if he has factual evidence on his side, then assuredly he has every right to believe as he does. And the desire for perpetuity is all but universal.

It is perhaps only natural that the hardships and in-

LOAVES AND FISHES

justices of this world should have given rise to the hope that happiness and equality (or even superiority!) should be attained in the life beyond by those who have suffered in this. It is because of these obvious injustices that many believe in the doctrine of reincarnation. The idea that spirituality and meekness should ultimately benefit the individual is no doubt a high ideal. In actual practice, however, there can be no doubt that this ideal has been utilized throughout the ages by spiritual and earthly potentates as a means of exploiting and keeping in 'wholesome' subjection the great unthinking mass of humanity. Princes and pontiffs have joined hands in this nefarious scheme of keeping the masses unlettered and uneducated, believing only what they were told, and daring to think for themselves only on pain of thumb-screw and rack. Priest-craft, in this sense, flourished during the early Middle Ages, and even today the leaders of certain religious denominations would really like to see the same laws in force; they are prevented from enforcing them only by reason of the relative degree of enlightenment now permeating all classes of society.

Utilized as a tool and a threat, therefore, this doctrine of a future life has weighed like an incubus upon humanity, and has prevented its evolution and the free expression of its ideals and mental progress. But it has only done so because the *kind* of future life pictured by the theologians was a travesty: eternal damnation, hell-fire and brimstone, and all the rest, except for the saintly elect. Gradually, men came to rebel against this gross injustice, and to believe that any God possessing

LOAVES AND FISHES

even human sympathy and understanding for the frailties of humanity could not tolerate such fantastic cruelty; nor could a God of anger and wrath be identified with a God of Love. Gradually such mythical notions began to be discredited and discarded, and the belief in a personal Devil dimmed and faded at the same time. A God of justice and love assumed the place of the older Deity in the beliefs of mankind, and freedom and hope began to replace thralldom and fear in their hearts.

Many men, who have been most fierce in their denunciation of mediæval theological creeds, have accepted a God of this kind. Tom Paine was an example. He was a fervent Deist, and so stated in his various writings. Probably no man has been more maligned and misunderstood than he. He was once described as a 'dirty little atheist'; to which the reply was made that this definition was quite correct, except in three particulars: he was not dirty, he was not little, and he was not an atheist! Much the same might be said of many men who have preached and written strongly against the older theological teachings.

There are many seemingly intelligent men and women today who seem to think that, because a man does not accept the traditional teachings of the Church, he is an atheist. Such is very far from being the case; thousands who reject these teachings *in toto* nevertheless believe in a future life and are devout Theists. Many Spiritualists belong to this category. The avowed Atheist flatly denies any form or variety of Deity.

The French Revolution and the succeeding wave of

LOAVES AND FISHES

rationalistic free-thinking did much to disrupt the older orthodox conceptions. There followed a century of rapid scientific advance, in which the material sciences made tremendous progress. Astronomy, geology, paleontology, physics, chemistry, biology, psychology tended to rid themselves more and more of superphysical conceptions, and make progress along purely mechanistic lines. Among men of science, the last century was essentially materialistic, and they evolved a mechanistic theory of the Universe. They conceded that certain important details remained to be explained; but the broad, general scheme was there, awaiting only these details to make it complete!

It was during the closing decades of this very century, however, that attention was drawn to a set of facts which could not, seemingly, be included in this mechanistic philosophy. These facts were psychic phenomena. A small but gradually increasing number of men of science began seriously to investigate these curious problems, and many of them, as we know, ended by endorsing their authenticity. When Sir William Crookes publicly announced his intention of investigating the subject, the press was unanimous in its praise, asserting that the world would now soon know the truth regarding 'this spiritualistic business.' Evidently they confidently expected a negative verdict. When, however, after three years' investigation, Crookes announced his positive conviction, that was another matter; it was then merely a case of 'another good man gone wrong!' His experiments, however, remain classic to this day, and his results have never been

LOAVES AND FISHES

explained. In his own laboratory, he demonstrated the reality of psychic forces with the same cool, dispassionate exactitude with which he had previously demonstrated the existence of certain chemical and physical phenomena.

It is essential to remember that certain psychic phenomena, quite aside from spiritistic 'communications' seem to negate any purely mechanistic explanation of the universe. Clairvoyance is one of these. The visual perception of an event actually occurring hundreds of miles away at that particular moment does not depend upon any normal sensory perception, nor apparently on any extension of it. Yet physiology and psychology unite in thinking that nothing can enter the mind otherwise than through the sensory channels. It is true that certain psychic phenomena may perhaps, some day, be dove-tailed into existent scientific knowledge; but this does not alter the fact that others of them, if true, can never be thus amalgamated with any mechanistic scheme. The existence and functional activity of the human personality apart from the living brain is one of these facts.

Psychic phenomena, therefore, tend to support the teachings of religion insofar as they tend to prove survival. But it should be emphasized that they do *not* tend to support the orthodox conceptions of survival as enunciated by the leading religions of the world. The modern philosophic conception of the future life is quite different from that generally held and believed, mainly in that no Heaven and Hell are accepted, but rather the continued existence and evolutionary prog-

LOAVES AND FISHES

gress of the individual human consciousness. Alfred Russel Wallace, in his *Miracles and Modern Spiritualism*, thus summarizes the teachings which have been 'communicated' through the more reliable mediums:

"The hypothesis of Spiritualism not only accounts for all the facts (and is the only one which does so) but it is further remarkable as being associated with a theory of a future state of existence which is the only one given to the world that can at all commend itself to the modern philosophical mind. There is a general agreement and tone of harmony in the mass of facts and communications termed 'spiritual' which has led to the growth of a new literature and to the establishment of a new religion.

"The main doctrines of this religion are: That after death man's spirit survives in an ethereal body, gifted with new powers, but mentally and morally the same individual as when clothed in flesh. That he commences from that moment a course of apparently endless progression, which is rapid just in proportion as his mental and moral faculties have been exercised and cultivated when on earth. That his comparative happiness or misery depend entirely upon himself. Just in proportion as his higher human faculties have taken part in all his pleasures here, will he find himself contented and happy in a state of existence in which they will have the fullest exercise; while he who has depended more on the body than on the mind for his pleasures will, when that body is no more, feel a grievous want, and must slowly and painfully develop his intellectual and moral nature till its exercise shall become easy and pleasurable.

LOAVES AND FISHES

Neither punishments nor rewards are meted out by an external power, but each one's condition is the natural and inevitable sequence of his condition here. He starts again in his future life from the level of moral and intellectual development to which he has raised himself while on earth. . . .”

The communion of spirit with spirit is said to be by thought-reading and sympathy, and to be perfect between those whose beings are in harmony with each other. Those who differ widely have little or no power of inter-communion, and thus are constituted ‘spheres,’ which are divisions not so much of space as of social and moral sympathetic organization. Spirits of the higher spheres can and do sometimes communicate with those below; but these latter cannot communicate with those above. But there is for all an eternal progress, a progress solely dependent upon the power of will in the development of spirit nature. There are no ‘evil spirits’ but the spirits of bad men, and even the worst are surely if slowly progressing. Life in the higher spheres has beauties and pleasures of which we have no conception. Ideas of beauty and power become realized by the will and the infinite Cosmos becomes a field where the highest developments of intellect may range in the acquisition of boundless knowledge.

Equally at variance with each other are the traditional and the newer doctrines as regards the Deity. Our modern religious teachers maintain that they know a great deal about God. They define minutely and critically His various attributes; they enter into His motives, His feelings and His opinions; they explain

LOAVES AND FISHES

exactly what He has done, and why He has done it; and they declare that after death we shall be with Him, and see and know Him.

In the communications which have come to psychical researchers there is not a word of all this. We are told that spiritual beings commune with higher intelligences than themselves, but that of God they really *know* no more than we do. They say that above these higher intelligences are others higher and higher in apparently endless gradation; but as far as we know no absolute knowledge of the Deity Himself is claimed by any of them.

All this seems logical and rational enough. It accords with our modern views of evolution, and with our sense of justice and right. According to these communications, Heaven is by no means a place of empty, idle felicity; it is an active, busy world, just as material and real to its inhabitants as is our world to us. It is a world of life and activity. This is assuredly more reasonable than orthodox conceptions. Spiritual philosophy merely teaches that men and women, after death, continue much as they were before, with faults and failings which they gradually learn to outgrow and overcome. . . . Despite all its weaknesses; despite the fraud, credulity and superstition which have unfortunately been connected with Spiritualism, it is nevertheless true that its moral and religious teachings are by many considered the most sane and rational in the world today, and they have the added advantage of being based upon a set of observable phenomena; and this cannot be claimed for any other religion.

LOAVES AND FISHES

If the doctrine, as such, were essentially evil and diabolical, as some theologians would have us believe, the teachings which have been given us would doubtless bear this imprint, and would disclose the 'cloven hoof' at one time or another. We should assuredly be told that this life is the all-important thing, and that we must 'eat, drink and be merry,' for nothing else is of any moment. Instead of this, what do we find? These teachings are unanimous in asserting that our condition in the next world will depend very largely upon our mental and moral development in this one, and that our happiness will depend almost entirely upon our own intellectual and ethical development. Is this the teaching of 'evil spirits'? Is it 'satanic'? We can hardly believe so. All the teachings which have come to us have been on a high moral plane, and if such communications emanated from deceitful spirits, they would certainly be calculated to defeat their own purposes!

The sort of future life here portrayed does not lend itself to the machinations of any priestly class or cult. Every man must work out his own salvation, now or later as the case may be, and no promises of future rewards or threats of punishments can be held over his head by some self-appointed intercessor. Our present life is merely projected into the future. We go on living and evolving in a mental world, a world in which consciousness and identity are maintained.

This conception of a future life, bereft of potential terrors, is assuredly one which appeals to the modern mind; at the same time it contains within it those elements which make it highly desirable to those craving

LOAVES AND FISHES

perpetuity for themselves and for those near and dear to them. Contacts would be re-established, friendships and love-relationships renewed, while infinite possibilities would seemingly be opened for our continued intellectual advancement and improvement.

Mankind in general undoubtedly seeks a continuation of life; life is precious and is not lightly given up. Here and there, it is true, are to be found men and women who do not crave any form of future existence, and who flatly deny its possibility; and it must be acknowledged that many of these men and women are of high moral and intellectual character. An ethical mode of life is for them sufficient. But it must be emphasized that they are in the minority, and that the craving for a future existence is deeply implanted in the majority of mankind.

Be all this as it may, it is evident that if the facts prove survival, it will have to be accepted even by these individuals, if they are intellectually honest and aware of the evidence for its existence. The mere fact that it was not the kind of future life they had anticipated does not in the least alter the case. Many men in the past proved to their own entire satisfaction that the earth was flat, or that heavier-than-air machines could not fly; but the earth is round nevertheless, and aeroplanes are now accepted as a matter of course.

THE FEAR OF DEATH

Self-preservation is the first law of nature, and every man instinctively clings to life, especially if he is more or

LOAVES AND FISHES

less convinced that this is the only life there is! Yet it is doubtful if the average 'religious' man is any more disposed to part with his life than his more sceptical neighbor, thus showing that his professed 'faith' has not affected his attitude toward life very deeply, and that it does not constitute a deeply-ingrained portion of his inner self. This may be due to his wavering belief, or to the fear of death itself, which is far more common than is generally supposed. Scientific proof of survival would, of course, dispose of the former of these fears, and set man's mind forever at rest. As to the latter, a few words of comment may not be out of place.

The fear of death seems to be based mainly upon two dreads: (1) suffering and pain connected with the actual process, and (2) that of a 'leap into the Unknown,' with darkness and uncertainty beyond.

As to the former of these, the testimony of thousands of physicians is to the effect that the process of dying is in itself painless. There are three main causes of death: old age, accident and disease. Death from old age is so rare that when a case occurs it is written up in the medical journals. Practically no one dies a so-called 'natural' death; nearly all are premature, in that life is cut short by illness or accident. In those rare instances where death from old age has occurred, the transition is easy and painless. The longing for death has replaced the longing for life. The desperate clinging to life which is usually manifested is merely a sign that life has been cut short prematurely, and that it should normally run a longer course. Man should live to be at least a hundred, and his faculties should be

LOAVES AND FISHES

intact to the last. The mere fact that such is not the case merely indicates that something is wrong with our civilized mode of living, and there are many who contend that this consists mainly in our faulty dietetic and general hygienic habits. Be that as it may, the fact remains that death from old age is exceedingly rare, and when it does occur, it is an easy and normal process.

In cases of death from accident, physical pain is undoubtedly experienced as the result of the bodily injury sustained. But the same thing would occur if the patient ultimately recovered! It is the injury, and not death resulting therefrom, which is painful. However, inasmuch as a very small percentage of the human race dies in this manner, and it is something which seemingly cannot be helped, in any event, we need not stop to consider it at greater length.

The vast majority die as the result of some disease, directly or indirectly. All such deaths are of course premature, in the proper sense of the word, and represent a cutting short of the normal span of life; hence the inner striving for its continuance. But in nearly all such cases, unconsciousness supervenes before death, and the patient is unaware of his final passing. The breathing becomes more and more shallow, within the blood-stream there accumulates carbon dioxide which acts as an anæsthetic, and the patient sinks into a final coma. This is the usual course of events.*

The pain which is experienced during the last illness is due to the illness itself, and has nothing to do with

* See *Death: Its Causes and Phenomena*, by H. Carrington, and *Death Deferred* by the same author.

LOAVES AND FISHES

the actual passing. It is well known that in certain diseases involving severe pain, such as cancer, this pain ceases shortly before death. Life gives up the struggle; the pains noted are the pains of life, not the pains of death. All the available evidence tends to show that the process of death itself is quite painless. The patient is usually unconscious, and in those relatively rare cases where the patient remains conscious to the last, expressions of peace, happiness and felicity often sweep over the face just before the patient expires.

From the point of view of suffering, therefore, no apprehension need be felt upon this score, since the fear is ill-grounded. Death itself is painless.

Highly interesting and significant factors present themselves, however, in connection with those relatively rare cases in which consciousness is retained to the last. Many years ago, Doctor James H. Hyslop wrote a letter to the *Journal S. P. R.* (VIII, p. 250), in which he pointed out that, if consciousness were *extinguished* at the moment of death, it should be theoretically impossible for the dying person to retain consciousness up to the very moment of dissolution, and yet be fully aware of the fact that he was dying. Yet this occasionally happens, and a case in point was described at some length.

If consciousness were merely being *withdrawn*, Doctor Hyslop argued, it might well be conscious of its own withdrawal, but could hardly be conscious of its own annihilation. Such cases, therefore, seem to lend support to the belief that withdrawal, and not extinction, is the process involved. And if this were actually

LOAVES AND FISHES

the case, we should have gone a long way toward proof of survival.

From the point of view of the psychical researcher, what happens at the moment of death is simply this: the 'etheric body' of the dying person slowly withdraws from the physical body as consciousness withdraws; this process takes an appreciable time, and has been witnessed by clairvoyants. Andrew Jackson Davis* and others have given us detailed descriptions of the entire process, as perceived by them, and it is easy and beautiful, according to their accounts. No terror and no pain are associated with the process, as perceived by this inner sight, and this agrees with the more objective findings of medical science, as we have seen.

We now come to the second main fear of death, which is that it represents a leap into the Unknown. But is it altogether unknown? From the point of view of orthodox theology it may be, and it contains perhaps many terrors for the truly wicked man. But, according to Spiritual philosophy, much is known concerning the Hereafter, and all that is known is both comforting and reassuring. The thoroughly selfish, greedy, 'bad' man, it is true, must undergo a more or less prolonged period of remorse and anguish for his misdeeds; but this is merely Cosmic justice brought upon his own head by his former mode of life; it represents the reaction to his former actions. But no eternal Hell Fire and Brimstone await him, nor the horrific vengeance of some wrathful Deity. He merely reaps what he has previously sown. And ultimate progress and enlightenment come to him

* See his *Death, and the After Life*, pp. 15-16.

LOAVES AND FISHES

when he has seen the folly of his ways, and becomes truly penitent of them.

But for the average, normal individual, in whom good and bad are mixed in varying degrees, there need be no fear and no apprehension. He passes into the new life, where he is met and lovingly cared for. Gradually, as he becomes oriented to his surroundings, he finds himself in a new, a mental world, in which he is dwelling in some 'body' resembling his own, the same individual as before, with all his thoughts, memories and associations. The ties of friendship and of love are as strong as ever. Under the circumstances, it is only natural that one of his first impulses would be to send back 'messages,' if that were possible, reassuring those left behind that he is well and happy, and that he continues to live in this new world, which is just as 'real' to him as the world in which he had formerly dwelt. And if the opportunity to transmit such messages presented itself, it is hardly to be expected that he would fail to avail himself of it, even though the 'instrument' used for such transmission happened to be an ignorant, illiterate medium. (Of the actual mechanism employed the would-be communicator would probably be entirely ignorant.)

If the future life remains unknown, this is largely because we have not availed ourselves of the opportunity to inform ourselves upon the subject. If we were to travel to Alaska or Burma, would we not in all probability buy a guide-book beforehand, and learn what we could concerning the country we were about to visit? And, inasmuch as we must all visit this Other

LOAVES AND FISHES

World at some time or other in the future, would it not be the part of wisdom to do what we can to inform ourselves concerning it? It would seem so!

Death must represent either annihilation or continuity. If the former, there need be no fear of death, since we would be as unconscious of the passage of time as before birth; if the latter, again we need have no fear, since the form of future life depicted to us has nothing of terror, but is rather a life of progress, happiness and continued evolution. On either view, therefore, we need have no fear.

Logic shows us that it is impossible to prove a negative. It is impossible ever to prove that there is *no* future life. On the other hand, it should theoretically be quite possible to prove its existence. The only desideratum would be the necessary evidence in its favor. This evidence is seemingly furnished by psychic phenomena, which in the minds of many prove the reality of a spiritual world and its habitation by spiritual beings possessing memories and personal identity like ourselves.

Just why the churches *en masse* should oppose and ridicule this evidence is indeed a ridiculous paradox. Psychic phenomena tend to prove immortality, the very thing which the churches have been teaching from time immemorial. Religion without immortality would be no religion at all, merely ethical culture. Human survival has been preached upon the basis of faith and belief alone, and one would have thought that any offer to prove this by concrete evidence would have been accepted with open arms. But such is not the case. The

LOAVES AND FISHES

churches generally have been loudest in their denunciation of Spiritualism and in their ridicule of psychic investigation. Despite the New Testament prophecy, 'greater things than these shall ye do,' this attitude is still prevalent among the more orthodox churchmen.

There are perhaps two main reasons for this. The first is that a certain amount of fraud, superstition and illusion have been found to exist; many professional mediums have been shown to be little better than vagabonds, and their admirers credulous dupes. This unfortunate fact has been freely admitted by the more intelligent Spiritualists and is certainly recognized by all psychical researchers. However, this fact does not prove that no genuine psychic phenomena exist, since many of these have been obtained through the instrumentality of amateur mediums of standing, or by private individuals in the absence of a medium altogether. It is these phenomena which have convinced many of the main truths involved, and forced them to accept the reality of a superphysical world. But this is not the place to labor the point. Suffice it to say that a large and constantly increasing number of scientific men and women are today assured of their reality, as is a large section of the thinking public. While this objection has some basis of truth, therefore, it is not a really valid objection to those possessing a knowledge of all the facts.

A second reason for the opposition is a far less worthy one, and is not perhaps consciously realized, as such, by those advancing it. It is that all religions are opposed to and jealous of all others, and frequently

LOAVES AND FISHES

fight them bitterly. It is not necessary for us to go back to the Middle Ages to find examples of this, for we see it all about us in the world today. Every orthodox believer feels that his religion alone contains and represents the only and ultimate truth, and that all others are necessarily false. Bigotry and intolerance have from time immemorial been associated with theology. When a new religion suddenly springs into being, therefore, and within a few short years sweeps round the world, claiming its adherents by the hundreds of thousands, it is only to be expected that both leaders and followers of the older faiths should resent and oppose it, even at times employing highly unethical measures in doing so. Human nature being what it is, it would be almost hopeless to expect anything else.

And yet it was against this very narrowness and intolerance that Christ constantly contended. He was far from being orthodox in His views, and was constantly giving offence to the Elders of the Church by His acts and teachings. He frequently reiterated that it was the spirit rather than the letter of the law which counted; that the old, negative Commandments could be more or less scrapped if only humanity would abide by one positive Commandment, 'that ye love one another'; that motive was the important thing; that all nations and all creeds were enfolded within the spiritual cloak of God, etc. He deprecated formalism and riches, the very things which are assuredly pre-eminent in some of our orthodox churches. A number of adherents to some new faith must mean a falling-away of membership in the old, and this is bitterly resented. For these

LOAVES AND FISHES

reasons, therefore, coupled with certain follies on the part of too ardent representatives, this new faith has been opposed and misrepresented.

But any movement must be judged by its best representatives, not by its worst. Were we to judge any of the more orthodox creeds by some of their alleged followers, we should form a sorry picture of them indeed. And the same is true of this newer spiritual creed. As formulated by some of its best minds, it is a logical and philosophical system.

Opposition to spiritual and psychic phenomena in general has of course arisen from another source entirely, *viz.*, mechanistic science, which denies any form of survival to the human consciousness. For it, as so often reiterated, mind is a function of the brain, and nonexistent in its absence. A monistic mind-body relationship has been adopted as a general working hypothesis. For psychotherapeutics and for general practical, working purposes this viewpoint is often useful; but it must always be remembered that this is, after all, merely a theory, and if certain facts render that theory inadequate, then it must be re-moulded in order to include these newer facts. Once again, psychic phenomena represent facts which cannot be encompassed within a mechanistic theory.

The mind of man has obviously evolved and progressed through countless ages. The object of this great forward sweep of life seems to have been to perfect a superior form of consciousness and an integrated personal identity. Yet if death be the end of all, what is the object of this gradual evolution and perfection?

LOAVES AND FISHES

What meaning could life have? Perfecting a thing merely to destroy it does not show good common sense. If there were some value and permanence to human consciousness, then one could see the significance of its evolutionary progress. But if it were merely blotted out or extinguished, at death, then no seeming reason for its emergence would be discoverable.

In short, the only thing which gives any meaning to life is the recognition of its importance and persistence. Why are we here? To what end? For what object? These questions have vexed the mind of man throughout the ages, and no answer has ever been found for them based upon materialistic philosophy. For such a theory, life has *no* meaning. But if survival be a fact, it would supply us with the answer to this riddle, and enable us to formulate some sort of rational and systematic interpretation of the Cosmos.

Human survival, therefore, is not only of tremendous scientific importance, but entails philosophical implications of the most far-reaching character. If mankind could be made to realize that the present life is merely a school of experience, a mere segment of human existence, and that our thoughts and actions, good or bad, tend to react upon man's ultimate destiny, surely this alone would constitute a salutary tonic and tend to alter and shape the course of men's lives. No man in his right mind voluntarily inflicts physical injury upon himself; if he does he knows that it is to his own detriment, and that he alone will suffer in consequence. If men could be made to realize that thoughts and motives

LOAVES AND FISHES

are realities just as truly as tissues and organs, they would perhaps order their lives differently.

Social relationships would likewise undergo revolutionary changes. Our present civilization is based almost entirely upon material gain, which is considered the only criterion of 'success.' Every man seeks to get ahead of his neighbor, and 'the devil take the hindmost.' The aim of life is the accumulation of wealth and the acquisition of personal property. Nothing else matters. This, it will be observed, is pure materialism, and is based upon the belief that this life is all. So convinced of this are many men in our own day that they accept it as a matter of course and as a natural creed of life. They no longer accept the dogmas of the Church, nor are they afraid of her bogies. The result is that a purely material philosophy of life has been more or less unconsciously accepted.

But if men could be made to realize that every unkind act, every sordid motive, every dishonest practice reacts upon themselves, hindering their own liberation and happiness and development, not because of the vengeance of some external Deity but because of the inevitable consequence of Natural Law; if they could be made to feel that this life is not all, but a mere fraction of life in its totality, constituting one connected Whole; if they be made to realize that a future life is something which need no longer be believed, or disbelieved, at will, but something the reality of which had been scientifically proved—then assuredly would our individual lives be renovated, in accordance with

LOAVES AND FISHES

this knowledge, and our social relationships would be readjusted in accordance with the Golden Rule.

National and international relationships would likewise be fundamentally altered. Hatreds and jealousies would tend to disappear, as men came to realize that all humanity is a great spiritual brotherhood struggling and striving along the road to ultimate perfection. Wars, we now realize, have come about almost invariably because of financial competition, and are no more justifiable nationally than they are individually. Mammon and Mars are cloven-hoofed Siamese Twins, the evil offspring of Greed and Materialism.

All this would assuredly be altered by the proof of human survival, and the enlightenment which this would bring. Tolerance, sympathy and understanding would increase and, most important of all, man's true relation to the Universe and to his fellow man would be realized.

It has been said, to be sure, that the proof of survival as furnished by psychic manifestations does not necessarily carry with it a proof of immortality, *i.e.*, of life everlasting. That portion of the human psyche which survives, it has been said, may after all be merely some temporary entity which in the course of time is itself disintegrated and destroyed. But I do not think that this objection need seriously detain us. Once prove to the satisfaction of the scientific world that *anything* mental survives death, and the props would have been knocked out from under materialistic physiology and psychology. If mind be shown to exist apart from a human brain, no biologist would quibble as to its prob-

LOAVES AND FISHES

able or possible duration, since, if it can continue to exist and function at all, it might continue to persist for an indefinite time in the future.

It is true that the form of future life postulated by this spiritual philosophy differs in many essentials from that pictured in either the Old or the New Testaments. As to the Old Testament, we know that this was founded very largely upon the Babylonian legends, and while a future life is dwelt upon quite fully in the Babylonian writings themselves, there is hardly any mention of it in the Hebrew Scriptures. What references there are strike us as contradictory and confusing. This fact has so impressed certain theologians that they have contended that the slight references to immortality were due to the fact that it was simply assumed as a self-evident truth by the older writers and not dwelt upon.

In the New Testament, the direct allusions made by Christ are again few and far between, all the elaborations having been made by later writers or commentators. These obviously represent merely the opinions and ideas of the writers in question. The early Church Fathers entered into the subject at enormous length and in great detail, and it seems highly probable that the teachings of Christianity, during the Middle Ages, were colored and influenced more by these than by any words of Christ or by any textual references in the Bible. This was the age of material and mental poverty, when the great mass of humanity was sunk in a spiritual slough of despond. Under the circumstances, it was only natural that the glories and felicities of Heaven should

LOAVES AND FISHES

have been dwelt upon in contrast to the miseries of this earth, and that the latter should have been attributed to the machinations of the Devil, who alone could sink and degrade mankind to so low a level.

It must always be remembered that Christianity and all the older religions were founded at a time when almost nothing was known of the Universe in which we dwell. The Greeks had made some important contributions to astronomy and other sciences, but these had been lost or forgotten, and for the most part were only revived during and after the Renaissance. So far as the European mind was concerned, practically nothing was known of any of the natural sciences.

Yet, the local, tribal Deity of the Old Testament perished with the first conquests of astronomy! The older myths were one by one discarded, as men's minds broadened; they were finally rejected *in toto*, by many at the time of the French Revolution. The older theological dogmas were similarly rejected, and with them was discarded also any belief in a future life, which to their way of thinking was part-and-parcel of these older beliefs and inseparable from them. Men seemed called upon either to accept a future life such as that pictured by the theologians or to reject it altogether. They decided on the latter. It did not occur to these men that perhaps there might be some third alternative, which they might choose. This was a future life representing merely the extension of human consciousness. This idea had not yet dawned upon mankind, and it remained for the newer spiritual teachings, based upon alleged actual communications and descriptions, to formulate it in detail.

LOAVES AND FISHES

Human survival, according to our Western standards, involves the persistence of consciousness and personal identity. There are those who claim to believe in a 'survival' only of a man's posterity or the works he has produced. This is merely a quibble, for when pressed they will admit that they do not believe in the persistence of individual self-consciousness. These factors do not prove 'survival,' in the traditional sense of the word, any more than the memory of a fire proves that the fire is still burning; under such an interpretation, so far as the man himself is concerned, he has virtually suffered extinction.

But personal identity involves memory, for it has been said: 'no memory, no personality.' If we could not remember from one moment to the next what we had thought and done, there could be no continuity of mental life. Any form of personal survival, therefore, involves memory. But if we retain our memory and personal identity, we must be very much the same individual as before, and this is precisely what the newer spiritual philosophy teaches. If a man were suddenly transformed into some seraphic being, as many orthodox Christians believe, this would be tantamount to annihilation so far as that individual is concerned. He would be a different person entirely. The joys or sufferings of that other Being need not concern us in the least, since they would have no connection with our present life and 'Self.' This being so, our present and future lives would have no unity or mental bond whatever; a man might as well live any kind of life he chose, since he would be totally unaware of the consequences

LOAVES AND FISHES

in any future existence. The orthodox theological view, therefore, leads us into a ridiculous *impasse* from which there seems no escape.

How much more reasonable it is to suppose that survival implies nothing more than the persistence of consciousness and personal identity as we know it! And if this be granted, what would be more natural than to assume that these same individuals would desire to send back reassuring and loving messages to those left behind, especially at first, just as we telegraph and write to some loved one immediately we have left him and started on our journey? It would simply be a question of finding the suitable method for conveying such messages; and that, so far as we can see, consists in finding a suitable sensitive or medium.

Assuming survival, then, everything falls naturally into place. We no longer have two discrete and separate worlds, but one interblending world, united and held together by bonds of memory and affection.

It is both useless and paradoxical for the critic to begin by assuming the reality of a spiritual world, and then denying the possibility of such communication with it. The very existence of such a world is proved only by reason of such communications. In their absence the sceptic would have every right to deny the existence of a spiritual world altogether, or ask the believer in it to provide evidence of its existence, which (in the absence of psychic phenomena) he would be unable to do. We cannot swallow the camel and strain at the gnat. If we accept survival, then communication has been amply proved by the mass of concrete evidence in

LOAVES AND FISHES

its favor. If we deny the validity of such communications, then the sceptic may well fall back upon the current physiological conception that 'thought is a function of the brain,' and relegate any belief in survival to the realm of error and superstition.

There are some who contend that communication with a spiritual world of the kind here postulated cannot exist for the reason that God would not permit it. But if it actually occurs, then it is obvious that such prohibition exists merely in the mind of the objector and not in that of the Deity. In short, he is merely expressing a personal belief or prejudice, or, as Haeckel would call it, a 'pious wish.' Moreover, science no longer takes into account any question of permission. An event either occurs or it does not. When a chemical reaction takes place, no one now-a-days believes that this has been either instigated or permitted by some anthropomorphic Deity. It has occurred in accordance with a definite law of nature. If our blood circulates, or our mind thinks, the same holds true. And similarly, if communication occurs, it must be in accordance with *some* natural law also, though it may be a law of which we have at present only the faintest glimmering.

How believers in the Biblical narratives can deny the possibility of such spiritual inter-communication is indeed a mystery, since those records are filled with references to it. 'Communion with angels' is constantly mentioned, and in our own times 'the communion of saints.' The saints were in their life-times merely exceptionally good men and women, while 'communion' must mean some form of communication. Wherein does

LOAVES AND FISHES

this differ from our modern doctrine, save that saintly men and women in our own days are theoretically barred from a similar privilege?

A future life, then, as postulated here, is essentially *natural*, as opposed to the older view that it is supernatural. This view has deprived death of much of its terror and sorrow; indeed the very word death has been replaced by 'transition' or 'passing.' We who are left miss those who have gone, being deprived of their loving association and companionship. But this would also occur if they journeyed to some strange country, where telegraphic or other communication with them would be impossible. They would have gone out of our lives also, but we would not mourn them in the same way, knowing that they are alive and well, and we would be sustained by the hope of seeing them in the not-too-distant future. That is precisely what the man who accepts these newer views of survival feels about those who have gone before. He believes that they are just as alive and happy as ever; he believes that they are just as normal and as fully 'themselves' as they would be had they gone to Central Africa instead of to the next state of existence. He further believes that he can at times meet and talk to them, and exchange news and information much as he did when they were here. Is this not more reasonable and normal than to believe that these individuals, by some strange spiritual metamorphosis, have been completely removed and transformed into some other sort of angelic being altogether? Or that they have entered into some infinitely long period of suspended animation, to remain therein until the Trump of Doom?

LOAVES AND FISHES

It will be seen from the above that our modern conception of a future life, based upon psychic investigation, is quite normal inasmuch as it is more or less a continuation of the present one. The same individual continues to live, only in a mental world instead of a physical one. It is true that we should no longer find ourselves surrounded by tables and chairs, houses and trees, composed of matter in the traditional sense of the word. But we might find ourselves viewing their mental replicas, which would appear just as substantial and 'real' to us at the time as our material world does to us now. We have analogies for this conception here in this life. One falls asleep and dreams, and in the dreams are perceived (by some interior, mental vision) tables and chairs, hills and valleys, and all the rest; they seem to us perfectly solid and natural at the time. This dream-world is doubtless largely self-created; but the fact remains that it is 'there' for the time being. If the next world is a mental world, in which the creative power of mind is enormously real and dynamic, we should actually see and feel and touch the things of that world, just as we do in our dreams. In fact the next life has been called by some scholars, a 'rationalized dream world.' It would be largely self-created, it is true, and have no ultimate basic reality. But it would exist for us as an actuality for the time being, none the less.

In an extremely interesting book entitled *The Tibetan Book of the Dead*, Doctor Evans-Wentz has summarized the teachings of the Lamas in this respect. They have elaborated an ingenious and complex system of

LOAVES AND FISHES

treating a man at the moment of death. This begins with purely physiological treatment, which involves pressure upon certain blood-vessels and nerves to insure the easy passage of the spirit from the body. Then as the man is dying, they 'suggest' to him that he will keep his awareness and consciousness intact, so that he will not be terrified by the delusory 'demons' or 'dragons' which may assail him. These, he is constantly assured, are hallucinations, 'thought-forms' built up by his own mind, having no substantial reality. He must pass through this Veil of Illusion, keeping his mind clear and alert, until he comes into the Clear Light of the Void, wherein he will see things as they really are. In this way he obtains 'Liberation.'

Here, then, we find from Oriental sources a certain confirmation of the advanced theory, promulgated by men who for many centuries have made an intimate study of the phenomena associated with death. They too believe that the next world is a mental world, in which the mind is enormously creative and in which seemingly real replicas of material objects are frequently perceived. Only the gradual re-adjustment and control of the mind, coupled with an added familiarity with one's environment, will enable one to perceive the spiritual world as it really is.

It may be objected that this conception implies a certain temporary disintegration of the mind, following physical death. But this is precisely what we should expect on any theory. The human consciousness is subject to all kinds of shocks, confusions and disintegrations, even in this life, as psychiatry has shown us.

LOAVES AND FISHES

Suppose you were travelling in a train, which was wrecked, and you were knocked unconscious and *nearly* killed. Gradually, as you recover consciousness, you hear vague sounds, which slowly resolve themselves into words and then intelligible sentences. You at first see moving shapes about you, 'men as trees walking,' which in turn gradually assume human form and then recognizable individuals. In such case, no one would think of being 'shocked' by the sequence of events, which are a matter of common observation.

Now, the greatest abnormal event which the living human consciousness can ever experience must be the shock and wrench of death. The mind is permanently dislodged from its material body; what is more, when it again 'comes to itself,' it is in an entirely new environment, a mental world, to which it is not accustomed, without a material body, of which it has been the habitual tenant. Under the circumstances, what would be a more natural result than a certain period of confusion and haziness, especially when we recall that, added to all this, the dream-like, creative powers of the mind are actively functioning? Were anything of this sort true, it might be supposed that it would take some hours or even days for the surviving mind to collect and re-adjust itself, and that help and ministration would be desirable or even necessary during this period, just as at birth when a new life is ushered into this world. And all this is precisely what this new philosophy teaches.

Is there anything in all this at which enlightened theology can take offense?

LOAVES AND FISHES

Furthermore, this view of the case would enable us to explain many seeming incongruities and absurdities which may be found in spiritualistic literature. One of the most outstanding and oft-quoted of these is the alleged communication from Raymond, Sir Oliver Lodge's son, in which he said that he had just had a whisky-and-soda and a cigar! This remark was bandied about as an example of the 'blasphemous nonsense' offered to the world. But is it necessarily so? Let us see.

When you fall asleep and dream, you may dream of mountains and valleys, rivers and vessels; or you may dream of a house or a restaurant with equal facility. If the latter, you might dream of seeing tables and chairs, bottles and glasses, just as they would appear in daily life; all these would appear real and substantial to you in your dream-world. Might you not, with equal ease, dream of drinking a whisky-and-soda and smoking a cigar? And would these not appear at the time, just as real to you as the rest of your environment? They would represent, in the last analysis, self-creations of the mind, it is true; but they would appear real at the moment nevertheless.

It may be objected to all this, of course, that our dream consciousness is not the normal consciousness, and that we do not create or imagine our environment when in our waking senses. That is very true. But even normal human beings have occasional hallucinations, in which they mistake illusion for reality, while a few degrees of fever or an excess of alcohol or hash-eesh or many other drugs will cause a man to see about him all sorts of things which have no actual existence.

LOAVES AND FISHES

The slightest perturbation of consciousness will often bring this about. Also it must be remembered that, in these instances, the man is animating his own physical body as usual, and in his customary material environment.

Those who have had psychic experiences, especially those who in cases of astral projection have at times seemingly 'left the body' for the time being, are unanimous in asserting that the creative power of thought in the mental world is little short of amazing, and a constant source of surprise to themselves.* It is for this reason that so many differing descriptions of the spiritual world have been given by those apparently 'visiting' it; their own creative thought-processes have to a great extent colored and influenced their sensations and perceptions. They are unanimous in asserting, also, that the *state* of consciousness, while vivid, is different from that in which it normally is.

Death, on this view, would merely represent the permanent (as opposed to the temporary) projection of the human spirit. The same general characteristics of consciousness might obtain in both cases, especially that of vivid, automatic mental creation. This is not nearly so *outré* or unintelligible as many might think. We all have mind's-eye pictures, conjured up by visual imagination, and in certain cases these are so vivid that they can apparently be 'projected' into a crystal ball, and seen as visions within it. Also these are occasionally so

* Cf. especially *The Projection of the Astral Body*, by Sylvan J. Muldoon and H. Carrington, and *Practical Astral Projection*, by "Yram."

LOAVES AND FISHES

vivid that they behave as though they were entirely objective, instead of purely subjective as of course they are. They appear to be magnified by a glass, reflected in a mirror, etc.* Here, surely, are examples of objectified mental impressions which no physical tests can disprove. If the living human mind has this extraordinary capacity of objectification while still in the flesh, how much more readily might it not effect the same results in some mental world, freed from the mechanical restrictions of physical matter? And, if this be true, we find an explanation of many puzzling and seemingly paradoxical phenomena lying within the psychic realm, such as those above cited.

This self-creative power of thought also enables us to explain another apparent absurdity; I refer to the clothes seemingly worn by spiritual entities. All 'angelic' visitants are depicted as clad in flowing robes or shining garments, while ghostly forms frequently wear the costume of the historic period in which they lived. One can perhaps imagine a spiritual body of some sort persisting beyond the grave, but surely, surely, it will be said, not 'spiritual clothing'! This question of the clothes of ghosts has caused no little discussion in the past, but so repugnant is the idea to 'common sense' that, about the middle of the last century, Cruickshank, the famous artist, published a little book upon the subject, proving to his own satisfaction the absurdity of the belief, and hence the hallucinatory character of all such apparitions.

* See *Crystal Gazing*, by H. N. Thomas, with an Introduction by Andrew Lang, who vouched for the above.

LOAVES AND FISHES

In this of course he was very largely right, and any psychical researcher today would agree that the majority of such appearances *are* mental or subjective, as opposed to objective and substantial. At the same time there are presented other problems which are not so easily solved. Assuming that the phantasm is a hallucination, the clothes in certain cases would present no great puzzle; they are part and parcel of the picture presented, and no more difficult of explanation than why the 'Jack of Spades' should appear clothed. But, in many instances, the apparition wears a costume typical of the period, and the seer has never seen this individual, and knows nothing at all about him until his portrait is identified in a picture gallery the next day. Now, let us assume that the clothing is a part of the figure, mentally created, just as the form itself is created. Whose mind, in this case, was involved in the mental construction? Not that of the seer, since the phantom took him completely by surprise, so to say, and his mind would not know what features and what clothing to 'invent,' to make the apparition realistic and true to life. It would appear that, if any mind is involved in the construction of the figure, this mind must be that of the *deceased person himself*, since no other mind could know the proper clothing to 'invent,' or the facial characteristics to depict. In short, in such cases, we seem to have an hallucinatory image projected by the mind of the phantasm *post mortem*. It will be seen, therefore, that we have here good indirect evidence of survival, even assuming that the phantom in question was purely hallucinatory.

LOAVES AND FISHES

It is possible, however, that in some instances clothing may represent quasi-material of some kind. Mr. Sylvan J. Muldoon, who has had many 'out of the body' experiences, asserts that on numerous occasions he has watched the formation of robe-like clothing going on, over his own body, quite independent of his own volition. It seemed to be formed from the 'aura' surrounding the body, and was apparently the effect of some deeper and unconscious mental functioning on his part, since his conscious mind was not concerned with the process at all. Just as some of the physiological activities of the body seem to be under the domination of this deeper unconscious Self, so this clothes-formation-process seems to be under its direction also.

This newer philosophy contends that man, after death, inhabits a body which is the exact counterpart of the physical body while on earth.* It is not the soul, but the *vehicle* of the soul, just as the physical body is the vehicle of the soul while on the physical plane. It is that *through* which the soul expresses itself. Curiously enough, this idea is repugnant to many, who seem to think that the soul must necessarily be a 'point,' so to say, insofar as it is spatial at all. But, all other considerations aside, the mass of human testimony in favor of a 'double' of some sort would tell against this view, and would support that which contends that an ethereal counterpart does in fact continue to exist and function *post mortem*.

Various problems have arisen and many questions

* If there are abnormalities and deformities in the physical body, these are supposed to be gradually rectified in the next sphere.

LOAVES AND FISHES

have been asked concerning the nature of the next life, as portrayed in spiritualistic literature. What, for instance, may be said regarding the love-life of a man and a woman? Is the function of sex still existent? If not, what takes its place? If so, does conception occur and are spiritual children born of the union? Swedenborg has written much upon this subject, and a curious little book by Doctor Holcombe, entitled *The Sexes, Here and Hereafter*, may be consulted. It must be admitted that many of these teachings are somewhat obscure, and the 'communications' which have been received upon the subject are likewise filled with statements that are virtually impossible to express in the language and imagery of this earth. Interchanges of harmonious and emotional waves have been described; 'spiritual proliferations,' and the like. But it must be admitted that there is much vagueness in these descriptions, and that all we can gather with any degree of certainty is that the ecstasy of sexual union seems to be attained and even surpassed by some more subtle process than characterizes it upon the physical plane. It has its counterpart, but just how this is induced seems incapable of precise formulation.*

Far more specific are statements concerning mental communion between one spiritual being and another. This is said to be effected by a species of telepathy, by

*It is hardly necessary to emphasize the fact that the majority of persons are notoriously repressed and reticent upon sexual subjects, even in this life, and it is rarely that an individual may be found who will discuss such topics normally and naturally. Might not this same reticence be part-and-parcel of the average man or woman *post mortem*?

LOAVES AND FISHES

means of which thought is freely exchanged, though no one's mind can be read involuntarily and against his will. We are in a far better position to understand such possibilities now than we were a few years ago; tuning in and out the radio has afforded us an analogy which may readily be grasped. This would have been difficult for our forefathers to understand and appreciate. Many of the discoveries of physical science are thus bringing us closer to a comprehension of spiritual laws.

It must be understood, however, that inhabitants of the spiritual world, according to the philosophy here being enunciated, are by no means perfect or omniscient. That is the traditional orthodox conception, which is flatly denied by the Entities themselves in spiritistic 'communications.' They assert, on the contrary, that they are the same individuals as before, with heightened telepathic and general psychic powers in their own sphere, but usually incapable of influencing or exercising them in ours. John Doe alive and John Doe dead are one and the same man. No mystery or miracle is involved any more than in his birth. It is, in fact, merely a transition, a *re*-birth. A man is still interested in the same people, the same things, the same hobbies. Good-natured banter, back and forth, and jocular or whimsical remarks are common occurrences at spiritistic séances. And why not? If only people could be made to realize that precisely the *same individual* is there, they would cease to be 'shocked' at this seeming levity, and appreciate the fact that a man naturally full of fun and good humor in this life would cease to be himself if he suddenly became deadly serious in the

LOAVES AND FISHES

next. He is still interested in his pet dog, in gardening and in cricket matches just as he was here. These interests, it is true, naturally tend to become less and less active, as time elapses, just as a prolonged sojourn in any foreign country would dim these interests and cause them to be replaced by others. But this is perfectly normal and psychologically explicable, and we see it illustrated every day of our lives. Despite the ordeal he has undergone, and his changed environment, 'a man's a man for a' that.'

This fallibility and limitation on the part of the communicator is frequently illustrated in psychic literature; "I don't remember," "I don't know," etc., are frequently heard.* It is true that there are seemingly Entities on the other side who are perfectly willing to give advice on all sorts of subjects about which they evidently know nothing, just as these same individuals would in life! Foolish and erroneous and nonsensical communications are received, just as are lofty and elevating and veridical messages. The character of the communications received depends largely upon the character of the personality sending them, and also upon the clarity of their reception, *i.e.*, the excellence of the medium. The utter folly of accepting all such communications as 'gospel' is therefore apparent, and no experienced researcher would dream of doing so. He would

* "Though the communicators usually speak as with the authority of an insight claiming to be superior to ours, it is interesting to note how repeatedly and emphatically they insist upon the limitations of their knowledge, and on the need for continued research and experiment on their own side as well as ours." (Gerald William Earl of Balfour, in *Proceedings S.P.R.*, Part 140, p. 158).

LOAVES AND FISHES

'try the spirits,' and form his own opinions accordingly. He would first assure himself of the identity of the communicator (no easy task) and, when satisfied on that score, would exercise his own judgment as to the advice or counsel given. He would do the same thing were that individual talking to him in life; he would also do so, when conversing with him *post mortem*.

A good example of all this may be found in the much-debated question of Reincarnation. We who live in the West are inclined to think, in our smugness, that we have a monopoly upon true religion, and that only a few benighted heathen still cling to the erroneous dogma of re-birth. As a matter of fact, the great majority of the inhabitants of the earth, hundreds of millions in India, China and the Orient generally, accept it, and a mere handful, relatively, of Occidental Christian nations reject it. This fact should at least make us slightly less dogmatic and more humble in our attitude regarding this doctrine. There are those who maintain that reincarnation is clearly taught in the Bible. Be that as it may, the fact remains that it is a belief maintained by millions of the human family, and defended by them with great dialectic skill. Their main contentions are these: that the injustices and inequalities of this world necessitate rebirth, in order to 'even up matters' and compensate man in one life for what he has suffered in the last (or make him suffer in some future life for his injustices to others in this). And further, that life, which is inherently immortal and everlasting, cannot have had a beginning any more than it can have an end. If it continues forever into the future, it must

LOAVES AND FISHES

have continued forever into the past. Recurring earth lives is held to be the only logical solution of this enigma.

The average spiritualist would probably reply to these contentions somewhat as follows: injustices there certainly are, but these are gradually rectified and worked-out in the next life (*i.e.*, the spiritual world) since, inasmuch as every man reaps the harvest of his own thoughts and actions, he may just as well expiate them there as here, and there is no necessity for his continued reincarnation, since the same results could be achieved without it.

As to the impossibility of conceiving life having a definite starting-point in time and space, and at the same time being immortal when once initiated, recourse might be had here to an analogy. Take a billiard ball at rest. Theoretically, so long as it was not touched or interfered with, it might remain at rest throughout eternity. Give it an initial impetus, however, and it would continue to move in a straight line forever, if it were not halted by other forces acting upon it. As a matter of fact the resistance of the air and the friction of the ball upon the table-top ultimately bring the ball to rest. But if we could assume that these factors were done away with, then the ball would continue to roll on indefinitely, though it had a perfectly clear beginning of its motion in time and space. Similarly, it might be contended, life, once initiated, would continue forever, though it too had a definite beginning in conception and birth. This might be one of several replies which could be made to the reincarnationist.

LOAVES AND FISHES

The above, however, is by the way, and I have mentioned the subject in the first place merely because it is one typical of the seeming inconsistencies and incongruities within our modern doctrine, which are nevertheless readily explicable when the subject is rightly understood.

Many French spiritists are believers in reincarnation, being followers of Allen Kardec. The majority of English and American spiritualists, however, are not. Questioned as to its actuality, many French (*post mortem*) 'communicators' assert that reincarnation is true, while English and American communicators assert that it is false! This fact has naturally been seized upon by opponents of the movement as a good example of the 'bosh' which is communicated in these séances. "There," they will say, "see how the 'spirits' contradict themselves! They don't even know what is happening in their own sphere, or what they are talking about. It is obvious that we cannot trust them or accept their word upon anything. There is the 'philosophy of Spiritualism' for you!"

But, looked at in another light, this is precisely what we should expect, and is perfectly natural. Suppose a devout Methodist or Roman Catholic or Presbyterian were to be questioned, here in Piccadilly Circus or Times Square, as to which was the true religion. Would he not reply Methodism, Catholicism, etc., according to his own prejudices and beliefs? Assuredly he would! Yet none of these views might represent an ultimate truth; and indeed all of them could not. And, theoretically, that same individual would answer

LOAVES AND FISHES

in precisely the same manner *post mortem*, when plied with the same questions. Similarly, if he died a firm believer in reincarnation, he would, when questioned, reply that this was a great truth; while if he died disbelieving it he would respond in a precisely opposite manner. This is exactly what we obtain in séance communications. It is only the old, theological conception—that the dead are at once invested with omniscient powers—which prevents us from perceiving that replies of this kind, so far from disproving this newer philosophy, or rendering it ridiculous, are precisely the replies we should expect, were it representative of the truth!

It has been objected, of course, that if this doctrine were a true one, and inter-communication with the next world a possibility, connection with it should be far more frequent, and messages from it should come to us in a more or less unending stream, whereas experience shows us that such messages, if they are ever conveyed at all, are relatively few and far between.

There are various answers to this objection. One is that such communications are far more frequent than the general public supposes, and that hundreds or thousands of them are being received every day. With this the critical psychic investigator would not agree, contending that messages which bear the stamp of authenticity are relatively rare, and that the majority of them are to be explained as the result of subconscious dramatization on the part of the medium, and other normal causes. Communications which appear to be genuinely spiritistic in character, those which cannot be ex-

LOAVES AND FISHES

plained by telepathy, clairvoyance, secondary personality, etc., are most difficult to obtain, and the task of sifting the wheat from the chaff is one of the most difficult ones with which the psychical researcher is confronted. Probably the vast bulk of these *soi-disant* communications are to be explained in other ways, and only a small residuum of them seem to emanate from the discarnate mind from which they claim to come.

At the same time, of course, it must be admitted that this small residuum is exceedingly striking and of high evidential value. We shall come to a discussion of this a little later on.

The modern believer in survival would further reply that the intra-cosmic difficulties of communication are so great that the only wonder is that we have received, not so little material, but so much! It is generally held that the Veil separating the two worlds is normally impervious, and that only a peculiar combination of subtle factors 'thins' it sufficiently to enable to-and-fro, communication to take place. The essential factors, seemingly, are: a suitably endowed Sensitive on this side, in a peculiar condition known as trance, and a suitable sender or transmitter on the other, both of these in harmonious relationship and working at the same time toward a common end. It is highly possible that the ability to send messages is just as rare as the ability to receive them; not every one who desires to communicate can do so, and some are always better communicators than others. This has been borne out over and over again in the material obtained through Mrs. Piper and others. A good communicator seems

LOAVES AND FISHES

to be a sort of 'medium' on the Other Side, just as a good Psychic is necessary on this. Only when this combination is found are clear communications received.*

The fish-bird analogy has frequently been employed. Both have their own natural world in which they live; normally there is no direct contact between the two. Occasionally, a bird may enter the water for a brief moment, usually in search of prey. He would report to his fellows (to continue the analogy) the curious forms and habits of the fish he saw beneath the surface. Or, a fish might occasionally glimpse the upper air, and in turn report to his fellow-fish the extraordinary characteristics of its inhabitants. Having had no similar experience of the kind, and no analogy to fall back upon, these reports might well be disbelieved as bizarre and fantastic, and that particular bird or fish branded by their sceptical fellows as a fraud or a pathological liar. Nevertheless each had glimpsed a genuine new state of existence, having as great a reality as that in which he dwelt. At the same time, it would be next to impossible for these occasional reporters to gain any adequate idea of the real life of these other creatures, from their brief and fleeting glimpses; far less could they obtain

* "Successful communication, however, would seem to depend as much upon the communicator as upon the recipient of the message. Among the limited number of personalities who play a part . . . there are some who appear unable to communicate without help from others, or only able to do so with the greatest difficulty. Indeed if we are to accept a hint given in one of the sittings, there is a mediumistic faculty on the other side analogous to that of mediums here . . ." (Gerald William Earl of Balfour, in *Proceedings* S. P. R., Part 140, p. 117).

LOAVES AND FISHES

any clear idea of their mode of living or their mental processes. Furthermore, it would perhaps be extremely difficult for them to formulate clear word-pictures, or to express in their own language (employing analogies familiar to them) precisely what they had seen and observed during their brief contact with that other sphere of life and activity. And when they stumbled and faltered, in their attempted descriptions, these hesitations would naturally be construed by their sceptical associates as evidences of evasion or delusion or of a too fertile imagination. Hence their stories would be discredited and disbelieved. The analogy is too obvious to need pressing. Mystics and seers in all ages have asserted that they have similarly glimpsed a spiritual world, but they have been similarly disregarded, while vigorous attempts have been made to show that their superphysical experiences were due to some abnormal condition of the mind. With this superficial estimate modern psychology seems to be in entire concurrence.

The competent psychical researcher would be the first to acknowledge the enormous theoretical difficulties which exist in any attempt at bridging the two worlds. Were it not for these, contact between them would long ago have been accepted by humanity as a matter of course. It is the relative infrequency of these communications which has caused the majority of mankind to disbelieve that they exist at all. Every year 40,000,000 human corpses are consigned to mother earth, to be transformed into other elements, and perhaps other forms of life. An equal number of human minds have been seemingly extinguished at death, together with

LOAVES AND FISHES

their hopes, fears, aspirations and accumulated knowledge. Is it conceivable that this should be the end? From the point of view of science, it is simply a question of evidence, of fact, whether it be so or not. The religiously minded person, and the emotionally involved, may indignantly assert that this cannot be; that the moral order of the Universe would not permit it. But that, after all, is merely an expression of opinion, and as opposed to it we have the view of the 'tough-minded' men (as William James called them) and the ultra-Rationalists, who contend that such is nevertheless a fact, and they point to the brutal fact of death in support of their claim. If there be any form of continuity, they say, where is your evidence of that fact? 'Provide me the evidence and I will believe!'

Now, it must be admitted that, aside from these ridiculed and despised psychic phenomena, *there is no evidence*. For centuries theologians and philosophers have labored to show that some form of future life exists, and the net result of their endeavors has been (scientifically) *nil*. Faith and belief are still considered essential for those who accept it. The theologians have been able to offer nothing better than their own words, based upon an alleged divine inspiration. 'Philosophy,' declared Professor Hyslop, 'is useless and worthless for proving a future life.' The practical mind of today wants evidence in support of any belief it may hold, and, lacking that evidence, refuses to accept it. The only concrete evidence which can conceivably be forthcoming is the proof of personal identity continuing to exist *post mortem*—the proof that individual human

LOAVES AND FISHES

consciousness can and does continue to persist in the absence of a material brain. It is precisely this evidence which psychic phenomena seemingly furnish, and, so far as we can judge, it can be obtained in no other manner.

Reflections such as these prompted Mr. F. W. H. Myers to say that psychic phenomena constitute *the preamble to all religions*, and to state his belief that, were the reality of these phenomena once accepted, every man, a hundred years from now, would accept the actuality of Christ's resurrection, whereas in their absence no man would accept it. He perceived very clearly the mechanistic trend of modern science, and the growing scepticism among the masses of mankind. The only way in which to meet the man of science is upon his own ground, providing him with the sort of evidence he requires. This is obtainable only through psychic investigation, and it will be seen from this that these phenomena, trivial and silly as many of them appear at first sight, are the only ones which permit us to formulate a world-philosophy at all in keeping with the potentially spiritual basis of our universe.

While admitting all this in theory, however, the fact remains that relatively few authentic communications seem to have come down to us, by way of confirmation. The question may quite reasonably be asked: if such communications are ever possible, why are they not more frequent? And why, when they are seemingly obtained, are they so often commonplace, trivial and disjointed? The explanation of these apparent anomalies would require a treatise in itself; but enough may

LOAVES AND FISHES

be said in this place, perhaps, to indicate the general explanations which may be given in reply.

Let us begin with the age-old problem of the connection of mind and matter. Modern psychology, as we know, contends that 'thought is a function of the brain,' and the chemical, physical and electrical concomitants of thought have in many instances been accurately registered and shown to exist. There can be no question that such material activities are somehow associated with the flow of conscious mentation, and the physiologist has contended that such physical activities are somehow the cause of thought. This is the creation theory of consciousness. It will be remembered, however, that many years ago William James pointed out, in his *Human Immortality*, that such undoubted connections did not necessarily prove that the cause-and-effect relationship postulated was the only one possible, but that there might be another kind of relationship altogether, *viz.*, a 'transmissive' function of the brain, which merely coincided with, or executed upon the physical plane, the concomitant mental activities. Or, as Bergson expressed it, 'the brain undergoes at every instant the motor indications of the state of consciousness.' (*Creative Evolution*, p. 270.)

It is true that this theory of the relation of brain and mind is no more proved than the other; both remain mere theoretical possibilities. This theory, however, would allow us to accept the possibility of super-normal psychical phenomena, whereas the opposing theory would not. It would remove the obstacles to their acceptance which the generally held view would

LOAVES AND FISHES

certainly present. It would not, however, in any way prove their actuality; this proof would have to come by the establishment of the facts themselves, which would necessitate some such view, to prove independently the existence of mind apart from brain.

Let us assume for a moment, and for the sake of argument, the simultaneous existence of two separate and distinct entities, the mind and the brain, which are somehow inter-related in the manner postulated by the doctrine of 'interactionism' (cf. McDougall's *Body and Mind* for an extended defence of this view). Let us assume that the mind somehow manipulates the brain, perhaps not directly, but through some vital intermediary. Your mind, then, is intimately associated with your body; it has, so to say, grown up with it, and is used to its habits, foibles and peculiarities. You express yourself through your own brain, and normally have little difficulty in doing so. Only when the latter is diseased, or out-of-order, do you find it relatively impossible to express the thoughts and feelings you experience. In many such cases, the patient knows very well what he wants to say, but his brain refuses to carry out his desired expressions.

Now let us suppose that you are severed from your physical brain, at death. You find yourself in a new world, a mental world. But, sooner or later, you discover an opportunity to return and communicate with those still living through the instrumentality of another animate organism. Perhaps this may be some one of the opposite sex! Under these circumstances, would

LOAVES AND FISHES

you not in all probability find it extremely difficult to control and manipulate this new organism with the same ease that you had formerly controlled your own? Would you not be likely to encounter all sorts of unexpected obstacles, habits, checks, inhibitions, tricks of expression, etc., which that organism might tend to express automatically in accordance with its customary modes of externalization? And would not these deeply subconscious or automatic processes tend to find expression in words or actions on the part of the controlled organism? Assuredly they would. These would accordingly represent, not the clearly expressed thoughts of the controlling entity, but an admixture of these together with the latent or residual material which likewise found expression, and which to some extent colored and influenced the results obtained.

Some such difficulties as these, we may suppose, attend all efforts at direct communication. But there would be many other difficulties also. The mere effort to manipulate another bodily organism under the circumstances might be an extremely difficult one, which would tend to cause a certain mental confusion, haziness and disintegration on the part of the would-be communicator. Such is indeed said to be the case; his mind is said to become hazy, and he 'loses his grip' upon the organism, making it essential for him to retire for a 'breathing space,' so to say, in order that he may collect his scattered wits and gather himself together for another 'try.' This process may have to be gone through several times during the course of

LOAVES AND FISHES

a single sitting, and this would tend to explain the confusion and disjointed character of many of the communications received.

For this there is a perfectly good analogy, drawn from daily life. Suppose that you fall into a swiftly flowing river; you cannot swim and are in imminent danger of drowning. A log floats by you; you grasp and hang on for dear life. As you are swept down the turbulent waters, your mind would not, in all probability, be in a very good position to evolve some new metaphysical truth, or to solve some abstruse scientific problem! All your thoughts and energies would be devoted to the simple problem of hanging onto that log! An Entity attempting to control another living organism is said to be in much the same position. The psycho-physical difficulties involved would be somewhat analogous. Doctor Richard Hodgson, after many years of work with Mrs. L. E. Piper, expressed himself in this matter as follows. Writing in the *S. P. R. Proceedings*, he said:

"Let the reader start to hold a conversation with two or three friends, but let him be forced to spell out his words instead of speaking them in the ordinary way, and be absolutely confined to this method of expressing himself, no matter what his friends may do or say. Let him be interrupted at every two or three words by his interlocutors, who tell him that 'they can't catch the last word,' and ask for it to be repeated, and occasionally several times repeated. Let them, further, frequently interrupt him by asking fresh questions before his answer to a previous question is completed.

LOAVES AND FISHES

Further, let him suppose that it is very difficult for him to hear precisely what these questions are, so that he hears only portions of what they say. Having made this experiment, let him then suppose further that instead of using his own words to spell his words with, he is placed in one side of a machine so constructed that the thoughts running in his mind have a tendency to be registered in writing on the other side of the machine, not as fast as he thinks them, but at the rate of writing, and that it is only by reading this writing that his interlocutors know what he has to tell them. Let us suppose, further, that one or more other persons are standing near him, on his side of the machine, and talking to him or to one another within his hearing, so that the words which they say tend to be registered in the writing; and let him further suppose that he is unfamiliar with the machine, and that the writing produced has a tendency to vary somewhat from the words actually thought of by him, owing to imperfections in the machine. Let him further suppose that the part of the machine in which he is placed is filled with a more or less suffocating gas which produces a partial loss of consciousness, that sometimes this gas is much more poisonous than usual (weakness or ill-health of medium) and that its effects are usually cumulative while he remains in the machine. . . .

“Important failures are due primarily, I believe, to the ignorance of the sitters that communication is under some such difficulties as these. And I cannot too strongly emphasize my conviction that, unless the presence of such conditions be constantly recognized by the inves-

LOAVES AND FISHES

tigator, his further research in this field will be futile. Having recognized the limitations, he may be able to modify them and minimize the effect of them; and, in my opinion, it is to the fuller and more exact appreciation of what these limitations are, and to what extent they can be removed, that the main path of progress in psychical investigation trends. . . .”

It can readily be understood that, if difficulties such as these are encountered in attempted communication, the process must be a most difficult and complicated one; and we can quite see the reasons for its comparative rarity. Only certain peculiarly endowed individuals would be likely to receive impressions of this type at all, and then only sporadically and fitfully. The average man of affairs, with his mind centered upon practical business problems, would automatically cut himself off from their reception. Our modern ‘mediums’ correspond, of course, to the mystics, saints and seers of the Middle Ages and early times; they were psychic sensitives. They too only received their impressions relatively infrequently, and then, usually, as the result of some mental or emotional stress or crisis. They too were treated with scorn and contempt, and their revelations rejected; so much so that one of them himself exclaimed, ‘A prophet is not without honor, save in his own country.’ Yet many of their prophecies were seemingly fulfilled with surprising accuracy.

This question of prophecy is an exceedingly interesting one, since it raises the whole question of envisioning the future, and how this could conceivably be done.

LOAVES AND FISHES

In modern psychic literature, prevision and premonitions figure prominently, and there are to be found scores of first-hand cases of this kind, many of them of high evidential value. These usually refer to the lives of individuals, however, as opposed to historic prophetic utterances dealing with national affairs on a large scale. The differences between these two we have emphasized elsewhere in this volume. Genuine premonitions of the kind seemingly exist, and Mr. H. F. Saltmarsh has recently made a detailed study of the cases thus far collected by the Society for Psychical Research; he has come to the conclusion that the future is at times unmistakably perceived, though often symbolically.

Yet, if the future can be in some manner discerned, by our modern seers as by the prophets of old, how are we to conceive of this as actually occurring? What is the *modus operandi* involved? Assuredly, we have here one of the most baffling questions confronting psychical researchers today. Seemingly, and from the point of view of 'common sense,' the future is non-existent; how, then, can it be foreseen? It is because of this difficulty that many men have rejected the idea of premonitory experiences *à priori*, declaring them to be impossible. Nevertheless, as I have said, recent careful investigations have seemingly shown them to be real. Inasmuch as this is the case, we must endeavor to formulate some theory which will enable us to account for them, at least insofar as we are able.

Our usual conception of time is that it is 'one dimensional'—that it moves, so to say, along a straight line.

LOAVES AND FISHES

Any point on this line would represent the 'present moment'; that to one side (behind) this point would represent the past, and that to the other side of it, the future.

It is generally believed that both of these are really non-existent: neither the past nor the future have substantial reality. What, then, is actual? The present moment! But the present moment is constantly moving forward into the future, so that what was the future a moment ago is now the present . . . and is *now* past! On this view, the present moment represents a reality between two eternities of nothingness. Can such a view of time represent the ultimate truth?

The past cannot be non-existent. If it could, there would be no memory and no history. In a certain sense, therefore, the past must exist, in some sphere of its own, though not in any material sense. Similarly, it has been suggested, the future may also exist in some manner, as a sort of matrix, into which the present is moving, and which, to a certain extent, moulds and forms it. This future may be, at times, and under exceptional conditions, sensed or perceived by those capable of drawing aside the Veil of the future, and perceiving what may lie therein.

This would represent a case of true 'precognition.' Similarly, the past may at times be glimpsed also, constituting a case of supernormal 'retrocognition.' Is there any logical basis for this assumption, and are there any analogies to guide us here? Let us see.

There are certain types of precognition which may be explained by assuming a greater knowledge of the sub-

LOAVES AND FISHES

ject's environment than he himself possesses. Thus, you may meet a friend upon the street, and say to him: "I predict that when you come to the corner of the street, your hat will be blown off"; and sure enough it is! You are enabled to make this prediction for the reason that you know something which the subject himself does not, *viz.*, that there is a strong wind blowing down the side-street. Your greater knowledge of his environmental conditions enables you to make this statement as to his future, which subsequently turns out true.

Similarly, it has been suggested, if there be intelligences which perceive more of the trends and tendencies of our lives than we ourselves do, they might be enabled to make certain predictions, which were subsequently verified. They perceive that *if* we continue doing a certain thing, or moving in a certain direction, certain results will inevitably follow; if we so continue, the prediction turns out correct, while if we do not, it fails to do so. This would enable us to understand why certain predictions of this type come true, and others do not. We have, so to say, diverted the course of our life in the meantime.

But this would imply that there are various alternatives open to us in the future. This is the view advanced by certain philosophers: that the future, instead of being a straight line is, so to speak, fan-shaped; a variety of paths open before us, at every moment of our lives, any one of which we can follow. If we take one, certain consequences will ensue; if we take another, different results will come to pass; and so on.

LOAVES AND FISHES

Now, by no process of ratiocination can we tell which path to take, or what the consequences of our choice may be. Therefore, we step forward into the future blindly. But if some intelligence having a wider mental horizon than our own could perceive these various paths and the consequences resultant upon our choosing any one of them, then that intelligence might be enabled to predict with some degree of accuracy these consequences, and perhaps warn us that such results would follow, and endeavor to prevent us from selecting the wrong path. Assuming this, premonitions and warnings of certain types might be explained.

But how is this 'higher mental viewpoint' to be obtained, and in what does it consist? Those who saw that interesting play *Berkeley Square* will remember the analogy therein suggested. A man is rowing down a winding river; the shores on both sides are immediately perceived by him; but the scenery behind him has passed out of his vision—it is 'past'—while the view around the bend of the river just ahead of him has not yet come into his line of vision—that is still in the 'future.' But the cottages and farm-folk he has just passed do not cease to exist when he has passed them. And similarly the hills and dales which he will perceive as soon as he rounds the next bend already exist, and are only waiting their turn to be perceived, when our boatman comes to that point in time and space when he is able to perceive them. They will then constitute his present, whereas they now constitute his future, while his present will then constitute his past. In short, both past and future already exist for that man, but

LOAVES AND FISHES

he is incapable of perceiving them until he moves into the space-time required in order for him to do so; and even then he would always be limited, in his vision, to the immediate present!

So much for our man in the row-boat, with his limited outlook. But now let us suppose that there is a man in an aeroplane, flying over the scene in question. He too would perceive the banks on both sides of the boat, but he would also perceive the scenery below the bend of the river behind our rower, and also that ahead of him. The past and future of the man in the boat would be simultaneously encompassed by the observer in the aeroplane, and seen to be simultaneously existing, becoming all 'the present' to him. From his higher vantage-point, both past and future would blend into One, and be seen to be but aspects of one *Universal Now*. This is the view taken by certain philosophers, and, highly metaphysical as it is, it nevertheless enables us to understand what may conceivably happen, in certain cases, when the future is in some manner 'predicted.'

There are many cases, it is true, which seemingly cannot be explained by this theory, or by any other which the mind of man has yet formulated. These cases constitute insoluble enigmas, in our present stage of knowledge, and can only be left to the science of the future, in the hope that they will some day ultimately be solved.

It is hardly necessary to emphasize the fact that this whole question of prediction and prophecy raises in a very interesting manner the problem of free-will *vs.*

LOAVES AND FISHES

determinism. If the future can ever be perceived, it may be said, then surely that future is predetermined; while if it can be in any way deterred or prevented from occurring, then free will seems to be involved, but in that case the future could not be foreseen! Here is a most fascinating and baffling enigma, and one which I shall not in any way attempt to solve.

One tentative suggestion may perhaps be offered. If our future be fan-shaped, as suggested, offering a number of possible paths, any one of which the individual may choose, might it not be that some supernormal perception might enable a Psychic, or some spiritual being, to perceive these various avenues, and what might happen in consequence, were the subject to follow one of them, and make a prediction accordingly? But that path is not chosen, as a matter of fact, by the individual in question, when the time comes for him to choose it; he selects another, and the prediction accordingly turns out to be wrong. However, if he *had* chosen it, the prediction would have turned out to be correct. On this view, it will be seen, both free will and determinism are involved; the potential future of that individual, had he chosen a certain course of action, was perceived, and to that extent determined; but through his free will he chose another course of action, so that the prediction was not actually fulfilled. This might perhaps be a solution of the problem, and one means of extricating ourselves from the seeming *impasse* into which we should otherwise be driven.

At all events, the *fact* of prophecy and prediction appears undoubted; and whatever future philosophical

LOAVES AND FISHES

theory may be advanced will have to be based upon that fact, and be in accordance with it.

Here, as elsewhere, theory will have to conform to fact! So much for prophets and prophecies.

I have spoken at length upon our more modern conception of a future life because this is the only one which in any way appeals to the Western mind, contrasted with the traditional theological conceptions involving Heaven, Hell and all the rest, which after all are based upon pure tradition, and are accepted upon faith and belief. There are certain types of mind, it is true, which seem to prefer such conceptions, and bitterly denounce all who are opposed to them. But the rapid spread of scepticism and rationalism is fast undermining the churches, and rendering the number of their adherents fewer and fewer. Most broad-minded clergymen acknowledge this fact, but they are at a loss as to 'what to do about it.' Mere moral exhortations will not help; they will not re-fill the emptying pews, nor replenish the coffers of the church. Congregations, actual or potential, crave interesting, constructive material, having some scientific and rational basis, and some tangible connection with the problems of life. At the same time they will always be found highly responsive to, and vitally interested in, any concrete evidence bearing upon this question of survival; clergymen who have familiarized themselves with this evidence, and have had the temerity to present some of it in their weekly sermons, have found an immediate and substantial response in their followers, and a lively in-

LOAVES AND FISHES

terest in the material thus presented. After all, this is but a re-presentation of the view that the universe is at basis a spiritual reality, and that the survival of human consciousness is a similar reality. Is there anything in these broad generalizations which run counter to the traditions of the church?

There are those, it is true, who have searched, and seemingly searched in vain, for any definite proof of survival, or for any concrete philosophy of life. Well-read in modern science, unable any longer to accept the 'proofs' believed by their neighbors to be conclusive, uninfluenced by traditional teachings, they have been forced finally into some hopeless outlook upon life and the negation of all its values. Individual cases such as these, while rare, are probably known to all of us. They are men and women deserving of our sincerest interest and sympathy.

From the standpoint of psychology, the explanation of their outlook is undoubtedly that they have become tired of life; some personal loss is probably responsible for this, coupled with a certain feeling of loneliness and isolation. The zest for life, the thirst for knowledge, no longer reside within them. It is individuals such as these who frequently relapse into the arms of some orthodox church, there to find rest and peace. While unable to subscribe, intellectually, to its creeds, they nevertheless close their eyes to these incongruities, and accept the 'easiest way' as a refuge from the disappointments, the storms and stresses of life.

Yet, while this is understandable, it is assuredly by no means admirable. It means that they have given

LOAVES AND FISHES

up the fight, and surrendered their convictions and their minds to a dominating power. They may have surrendered gracefully, but it is a surrender nevertheless.

What words of hope and encouragement may be given to men and women such as these? Should they not somehow be re-infused with a wholesome zest for life and a more optimistic philosophy? Aside from individual emotional complications (for the solution of which each case requires individual care) might not such persons be told that final Truth cannot be expected in our life-time, and that it would be folly to look for any ultimate and final solution of the problems of the world in our present stage of scientific knowledge? We must build a philosophy of life upon the data we possess, and this, though faulty, would nevertheless represent *our* philosophy. If we are well informed, it is as likely to be true as any other; and it is at all events true *for us*, and upon it we can mould our plan of living.

Furthermore, individuals such as these should be made to realize that there is a large and constantly growing mass of respectable evidence in favor of a future life, based upon concrete, factual material. A knowledge of these psychic facts would doubtless bring help and consolation to many a desperately striving soul, and afford the assurance of the continuity of life, and of the happiness and intellectual satisfaction so urgently needed, and so long sought. There are thousands of men and women living today who, by reason of the communications received from those who have gone before (convinced by tests of identity), have been spiritually rejuvenated, and have found joy and

LOAVES AND FISHES

peace and assurance in life, where otherwise there had been only doubt, confusion, and despair. The proof of survival, of a future life, has been of inestimable help, and a definite milestone on the Road to Immortality.*

Within the past few years, there has been a veritable epidemic of suicides, doubtless due in large part to the economic depression and the dejection and despair resulting in consequence. This method of egress has been sought as a means of escape from life and its dreary depressions and stern realities. But if men could be made to realize that the present life is a mere segment of its totality, and that it has definite continuity (not problematical, but certain) which allows no escape; that the next life is a continuation of this one; that a life thus ended prematurely and suddenly necessitates the working-out of even greater problems

* As this book was passing through the press, the following 'communication' was obtained in my presence by a person who had read part of the MS., and who secured what follows through automatic writing. It seems to be an extension of the thought here expressed:

Add to this conception some visioning of the eternity of life, wherein mankind has come—through the process of unfolding, even as the lotus unfolds its petals, to absorb the light of the sun, the air-currents and the invigorating moisture of the dew—to this stage in his progress by absorbing the Cosmic forces and reaching ever toward full perfection, in his understanding of the part he is to play in the Cosmic scheme of things, and the great universal consciousness of mind.

Were man to picture himself in this light, as playing an important personal part in a great plan of evolvment, could he ever feel despair? No, I venture to say he would then be able to adjust himself more readily to the growing pains of an earthly existence, and come more readily and easily into his full heritage.

If he could visualize himself as a growing human plant, run-

LOAVES AND FISHES

and difficulties in the hereafter, surely this would have a deterrent effect upon mankind, and bring home to them the folly of attempting any such seemingly simple solution of the problem.

Furthermore, there is much evidence tending to show that suicides remain for some considerable time helpless and confused when thus projected prematurely into the spiritual world. All the communications which have been received from, or about, such individuals confirm this idea. They are described as finally coming to the realization that they have not thereby ended their problems, but merely postponed them, and through this act retrogressed many stages in their evolutionary progress.

It is said that certain life-experiences are essential, and that many of life's problems, however difficult, can-

ning each life-season as does the lotus, progressing slowly but surely to full-bloom and then casting aside the physical garment to become the seed for the next existence, how could man then ever despair? If he could but realize the perfection of the plan for his delivery from each span of experience into a greater and more perfect state!

But first he must have vision, and that he can be given by the mental and spiritual leaders who see ahead and record the vision that *they* are given of what is and is to be. Truly there is no beginning and never any end! It is magnificent, and we should do well never to insult the Great Intelligence by our petty misunderstandings and pettier worries over these affairs.

We can best serve ourselves and others by fitting ourselves into the scheme 'of things that are to be,' and fulfilling our destiny by maintaining a conscious desire to reach perfection's goal. Our individual place in this scheme will in the course of its progress be revealed to us; and when that day arrives the peace and contentment which passeth all description shall enter into our hearts, and we shall be free from all discouragements forevermore.

The realization of this fact will shorten our probationary term, and we may well live gracefully without regrets or despair, in an enthusiastic desire to attain this great end. *Perfectio et pax.*

LOAVES AND FISHES

not be avoided but at best merely postponed by such suicidal act; no one knows the cost to the individual's spiritual progression. If some rational philosophy of life could be held by these persons, they would perceive the senselessness of such actions, and save themselves much agony and travail in the hereafter. Proof of a future life would assuredly provide this philosophy and serve as a wholesome deterrent in all such cases of contemplated suicide.

In forming our estimate of the world in which we live, then, this question is assuredly of paramount interest: Is man essentially body or spirit? Is he a body, with a temporary, evanescent mind, or is he an abiding entity of some sort, temporarily clothed in a material body? Materialism contends that the former of these is true; all religion, of course, accepts the latter alternative. But, as so often emphasized, the mental outlook and temper of our age is changing rapidly, and a goodly percentage of our young people have grown up with no belief in a spiritual world, and no faith in any hereafter. It is useless to close our eyes to this fact so plainly obvious to the impartial observer. Up to a certain point, one is inclined to think of this as a wholesome reaction against the oppressive orthodoxy of the preceding ages, ridding the youthful mind of grotesque fears and superstitions. At the same time, it is also true that this point of view has led to a selfish, greedy materialism, in which physical possessions are rated as the only things worth while, and serious thinking and attempts at self-improvement are discarded in favor of frivolous, life-wasting 'good times.'

LOAVES AND FISHES

Could these young people be made to realize that cause and effect, sowing and reaping, are not supernatural phantasies, but natural laws, which act and react in their own lives with the mathematical certitude of chemical equations, they would be far more impressed and more ready to work and live in harmony with the great spiritual laws of the Universe.

This conception, of course, brings us very close to the Oriental doctrine of 'karma,' though the latter is not limited in its action to one life, but extends over a whole series of lives, being thus intimately connected with reincarnation, of which we have already spoken.* The Oriental view is that the personal identity is not maintained after death, but is absorbed into some Absolute Consciousness, of which it is but an emanation, and to which it ultimately returns, carrying with it the accumulated experiences of its various lives. Much might be said regarding this doctrine, which is greatly misunderstood; but to the average Western mind survival without individuality would be tantamount to no survival at all; while, if the fundamental facts of Spiritualism be true, this doctrine is of course disproved by the evidences of identity *post mortem* which are constantly being obtained.

I have not spoken, thus far, of one type of a future life in which a certain number of people seemingly believe; I refer to 'conditional immortality.' The main

* Regarding this idea of 'karma,' there is much misunderstanding. As popularly used, one would think that Karma was something which ran after an individual and bit him, like a dog! As a matter of fact it means merely cause-and-effect, in the strictest sense of the term.

LOAVES AND FISHES

contention of this doctrine is that survival is not a universal law, but is rather something to be *achieved*; if the individual has attained a certain degree of mental progress and spiritual perfection in this life, he may survive; not otherwise. To use a rough analogy, if a ball of wool be sufficiently tightly wound, it will remain a ball when tossed along the floor; but if it be only loosely wound, it will unravel under the friction and shock of the impact. The soul of man, on this view, is not something innately immortal, but is conditioned by the individual's progress in this life.

This belief has naturally found relatively few adherents. The main objections to it are perhaps two-fold. In the first place, we can hardly believe that life, if it persists at all, does not persist by reason of its very innate quality to persist, quite apart from the degree of mentality or other qualities of the individual in question. In the second place, the obvious unfairness of this doctrine becomes at once apparent as soon as we begin to consider it seriously. What would be the criterion of survival, on this view? And who would determine it? Would a splendid degree of mental integration and control be the essential factor? But we know that there are many exceedingly brainy men who are nevertheless thorough scoundrels. Are these men to survive, while the loving mother, who has devoted her life to her children and their welfare, to the exclusion of mental development, must perish? On this view the natural educational and environmental differences between men would necessitate a certain segregation into Sheep and Goats, through no fault of their

LOAVES AND FISHES

own, or, on the other hand, through no special striving on their part. Obviously this cannot be the criterion of survival!

Then is spiritual development, in the traditional sense, to be considered so? This would assuredly be more in keeping with orthodox theology, but would not fit our more modern conceptions of life at all. Is the hypocritical church-goer entitled to survive, while the sceptical scientist, of the utmost probity and kindliness of character, to be extinguished?

'But,' it may be argued, 'this is hardly a fair comparison. We speak of *real* spiritual development, and not that which is merely pretended, while you have held up a false prophet.'

Perhaps so; but what is meant by *real* spiritual development in this sense? Does it mean complete absorption such as that practised by the Mystics? Probably not one man in a million would be found in our days who could or would undertake this type of mental solitary confinement. The whole trend and spirit of our times is against it. On this view, the 'saved' would be few and far between indeed! And the result of everybody doing the same thing would be disastrous, since none would be left to carry on the active, busy life of the world. Humanity would perish! Surely *that* cannot be the answer either!

But perhaps this is not meant? It is excessive; too much of a good thing? Rather a rounded, normal degree of goodness and spiritual development is suggested? That is an admirable criterion, surely, and 'a consummation devoutly to be wished.' But again the

LOAVES AND FISHES

natural inequalities of mankind must be taken into consideration, and the grades of human goodness and badness. Who or what is to draw the dividing line here? Is man's survival to be determined upon a sort of percentage basis: a man possessing 75 per cent of the required qualities surviving, while one possessing only 74 per cent of them vanishing forever? It would be preposterous to suppose so. This whole doctrine of 'conditional immortality' becomes absurd, when even superficially examined, and forces us to the conclusion that human survival must represent a universal and natural law, potentially inherent in every one of us, and finding its fulfillment in man's inevitable transition into some spiritual world upon the dissolution of his physical body.

Man's conceptions of the after-life have varied enormously throughout the ages, and have differed with every age and in every country. It is this fact, very largely, which has caused many anthropologists and students of comparative religion to discredit all of them equally, and to see in them merely myths and traditional fables. In taking this view, however, there is always the danger of 'throwing away the baby with the water from the bath.' The majority of white men, when they visit Africa or Haiti or other countries still populated by primitive peoples, go there with the firm conviction that all stories of magic and witchcraft, etc., are superstitions pure and simple, having no basis in fact. But, after having lived in the country for a number of years, they almost always tell a different story. Some of them will shake their heads, and say, 'Well,

LOAVES AND FISHES

I don't know; I've seen some strange things happen. . . .' Others will state their conviction in no uncertain terms. Almost invariably, their scepticism has vanished, that is, if they have really had any close association with the natives. Genuine psychic phenomena undoubtedly exist among all primitive peoples; yet anthropologists as a whole continue to ignore such facts, treating them as interesting traditional superstitions, but unworthy, of course, of exact scientific study! Many of the native beliefs associated with these manifestations are unquestionably fantastic; but that does not alter the fact that their central belief in the reality of spiritual phenomena is justified, and based upon pragmatic evidence which is available to any open-minded student who may care to investigate it.

Might it not be that an analogous situation exists with regard to these primitive conceptions of a future life? The consciously constructed pictures of such a state would naturally be colored and influenced, very largely, by the lives they had lived, the environment with which they were familiar, and their natural expectations. All these would represent the frills and trimmings, so to say, which their own imaginings and desires had super-added. The great central fact, however, the core of their belief, namely, survival in some spiritual world, would remain unaffected by all these extraneous additions, and might represent a fundamental verity which had been experientially verified by many members of the tribe. This is all that we are required to believe in order to accept, as valid, the fundamental basic truth of their belief.

LOAVES AND FISHES

Glimpses of this spiritual world which have been obtained by seers in the past, according to their own accounts, have been for the most part fleeting and evanescent. They have been mostly visional experiences, obtained in what Andrew Jackson Davis called 'the superior state.' Such trance-like revelations were doubtless colored and influenced to a great extent by the subjective prepossessions of the seers themselves, and no experienced psychic investigator would think otherwise. Such material is always hard to evaluate, especially when we take into account the fact that much of this is doubtless symbolic, and that the seer afterwards has great difficulty in expressing in words the essence or inner meanings of his experiences.

Far more reliable than these, if they are valid at all, are those communications from beings like ourselves, living in that world, who describe in detail its characteristics and essential details. In this way we seemingly obtain first-hand information, just as we should from any explorer who for some time had sojourned in a strange land. We are no longer compelled to fall back upon revelatory material which, interesting as it is, must always suffer from the fundamental defect of being to some extent influenced by the mind of the seer. Modern spiritual philosophy has for the first time in the world's history given us a precise and detailed account of the next life, and from this vantage point, we are enabled to evaluate the various religious teachings, and perceive what may be true and what false in all of them. Curiously enough, it is the Roman Catholic faith which comes nearest to the Spiritualistic, though

LOAVES AND FISHES

it is one of the latter's most bitter opponents! The doctrine of Purgatory agrees very well with the temporary, transitional state of re-adjustment through which every newly-born soul must pass, while if we accept Heaven and Hell as mental states of relative happiness and unhappiness in which men and women may perhaps be helped (telepathically) by the prayers and mental attitudes of those still living, we should have a good symbolic picture of the after life, as described in psychic communications.

There are certain students of this subject, it is true, who are inclined to accept the doctrine of some vast Cosmic Consciousness, which is somehow 'tapped,' when communications of the spiritistic type are received, and that consequently it is *this*, rather than the individual thoughts and memories of those who have passed over, which is responsible for the messages obtained. On this view, of course, the thoughts and emotions of every living individual must somehow be stamped or impressed upon this Consciousness, which thus constitutes a vast Reservoir of the experiences of mankind, and from which such experiences are somehow recoverable.

Aside from the theoretical difficulty of conceiving any such Consciousness, we are at once confronted with tremendous problems as soon as we begin to explain its *modus operandi*. In what does it consist? What relation can it bear to the individual consciousness? How are thoughts impressed upon it or stored within it? How can they be extracted from it again? What distinguishes the thoughts and memories of one person

LOAVES AND FISHES

from those of another, so that they could be accurately selected by some one endeavoring to reproduce an individual personality, to the exclusion of all others? These and a thousand other difficulties at once present themselves as soon as we endeavor to work out the necessary details involved in the process; they land us in a maze of contradictions and incomprehensibilities. It is true that this view has been seriously discussed by philosophical thinkers of the first order, such as William James and Hans Driesch. But it is, after all, a pure theory, which has been advanced as an alternative to the relatively simple, straight-forward doctrine of Spiritualism. We do know that individual, human consciousnesses exist, possessing their own stores of memories, thoughts and associations; it is in many ways assuredly far easier to believe that these individual minds continue to function in some spiritual world than to accept the Ptolemaic doctrine of 'cycles and epicycles' which would be necessary in order to make this other conception 'work.'

Furthermore, as Professor Driesch himself has lately remarked: 'These two great parapsychical hypotheses do not necessarily contradict one another; both of them may be true' (*Proceedings S. P. R.* Vol. 43, p. 14).

Yet the question might be asked: 'Assuming the possibility of all that has been said, why should we have a physical body at all? Why should we not persist in some spiritual world from the beginning to the end of things, without bothering with this entangling mass of matter, either in one life or in many? Might not man gain his

LOAVES AND FISHES

experiences, learn his lessons and attain ultimate perfection in some spiritual world quite detached from this tiny planet on which we dwell?’

This is indeed a difficult question to answer, when thus stated. Perhaps Fitz Hugh Ludlow had some inkling of the correct reply, when, in his remarkable book *The Hasheesh Eater*, he wrote:

“ . . . That spirit should ever lose the traces of a single impression is impossible. DeQuincy’s comparison of it to the Palimpsest manuscripts, which is one of the most powerful which even that great genius could have conceived, is not at all too much so to express the truth. We pass, in dreamy musing, through a grassy field; a blade of the tender herbage brushes against the foot; its impression hardly comes into consciousness; on earth it is never remembered again. But not even that slight sensation is utterly lost. The pressure of the body dulls the soul to its perception, other external influences supplant it; but when the time of the final awakening comes, the resurrection of the soul from its charnel in the body, the analytic finger of inevitable light shall search out that old inscription, and to the spiritual eye no deep graven record of its earthly triumphs shall be clearer.

“The benumbing influences of the body protect us here from much of remorse and retrospective pining. Its weight lies heavily upon the inner sense, and deadens it to perception of multitudes of characters which, to be read, require acute powers of discernment. When the body is removed, the barrier of the Past goes also.

“This fact may perhaps be one of the final causes

LOAVES AND FISHES

why the body exists at all. Why are we not born directly into the spiritual world, without having to pass through a weary preliminary experience, hemmed in by the gross corporeal nature? May not the answer be something like this? Were the soul, at its first creation, introduced directly into the world where truth is an intuition, and stand in the dazzling light of its own essence, the dreadful sublimity of the view might prove its annihilation. We accordingly pass first through an apprenticeship, in which we have nothing colossal either to learn or to do; and eternal verities dawn on us slowly, instead of breaking in like lightning. . . . Without this slow indoctrination, the soul might have flamed out in dazzling momentary irradiance, and then been extinguished in eternal nothingness. . . .”

That all this is purely speculative we must admit. Such a view was, perhaps, influenced to some extent by the author's own experiments, in which he felt assured of the severance of his soul from his body, under the influence of hasheesh. Yet, such drugs have often been the means of remarkable interior illumination, and great flights of philosophical fancy—witness Paul Blood's classical pamphlet, *An Anæsthetic Revelation*, summarized by William James, in his *Memories and Studies*. Perhaps Truth may be glimpsed at such times more surely than in our ordinary, wake-a-day consciousness.

Such experiences have at all events profoundly convinced their recipients that the Universe is at basis spiritual and rational, and that *the Invisible is the Real*. We of the West are inclined to believe that only the material world has substantial reality; things which

LOAVES AND FISHES

can be seen and touched and handled represent 'realities,' while those which cannot have no concrete existence. Precisely the reverse of this is, of course, the case. Aside from the fact that modern physical science has very largely disposed of 'matter,' in its traditional sense, the reality of the invisible may be proved by every-day experience and, so to say, *ad oculos*.

You are looking at another person, and conversing with him. What, at such time, do you see? That other person's ego: his individual self-consciousness? Certainly not. You perceive his hair, his eyes, his skin, his clothing. But the personality with whom you are conversing, whose thoughts you grasp, this is locked up in that little dark chamber we call the skull, and is never envisioned by mortal eye. *No person has ever seen another*: you have never seen any one else, and no one has ever seen you! A startling thought, yet a true one. Nevertheless, this invisible personality is the greatest reality in life; it is you yourself! Here is an example, then, of some invisible and intangible Entity which very obviously exists, and has activity and value. Does it not become merely a question of evidence as to whether, on the one hand, this invisible Being possesses powers and potencies which are undeveloped and unrecognized, and whether, on the other, it continues to persist *post mortem* in some mental world of its own? Assuredly it would only require the concrete evidence of its persistence in order to demonstrate that fact.

And if such an invisible world exists, we are seemingly denizens of it, not only hereafter, but here and now! Sir Oliver Lodge has suggested that in reality we

LOAVES AND FISHES

are inhabitants of an ethereal world rather than of a material one; *that* is our natural habitat; this physical plane of existence is merely one phase of our self-expression for a limited time only. This is in accordance with the highest idealistic philosophy, which contends that the mental Universe is after all the only true one, and that things material are but ephemeral appearances, having no ultimate permanence or value.

The persistence of the individual human consciousness is certainly a necessary ingredient in any such philosophy, for in its absence our individual being vanishes, as well as all other values of which it is the necessary pivot. All the interest which attaches to this world, all the motives and reasons for life, the explanation of which our philosophical systems have for their aim and end, vanish also. The Substance of Monism is assuredly eternal, while the persons which it brings forth are not! The joys and sorrows by which they are illusioned one moment must be equally obliterated into nothingness. One cannot understand, indeed, how any values whatever, whether they be inferior and purely economic from the material point of view, or the more spiritual ones of truth and beauty, or the supreme social values of justice and love, can subsist in the abstract or impersonal form after the extinction of individual consciousness, which alone is capable of feeling and of appreciating them.

Our outlook upon the Universe must be colored and influenced by the meaning we attach to it, whether or not it be 'purposeful.' We know, for example, that for the thermo-dynamic theory, the universe in its totality is

LOAVES AND FISHES

but a vast machine in which all the changes are due to the differences of temperature existing between its extreme limits, namely, the incandescent nebulae on the one hand, and on the other, the absolute Zero of interstellar space (-273° C.). It is in the course of this cooling (the degradation of energy) from one of these limits to the other that are formed the chemical combinations, so unstable, which constitute all living beings. But this condition, favorable to the unfolding of life, would only have appeared very late, and then only to last a short time, since a further fall of some dozen degrees would suffice to congeal forever this protoplasm. Thus one might conclude, with M. Henri Poincaré, that life is but a short episode between two eternities of death, and that, in this episode even, conscious thought has lasted and will last but a moment. Thought is only a flash in a middle of a long night. Yet it is this flash which is everything!

The philosophical spiritualist and the idealist cannot believe that this flash-in-the-pan *is* everything. For him life is of more value; it has a more definite purpose. The hopes and aspirations of humanity are realities, as truly as are granite mountains. Of course, there is nothing to prevent us from thinking that this world is absurd, meaningless, devoid of sense, or that it is the work of an imbecile or a fool. But there is also nothing absurd in supposing that it has sense, and a sense which tends toward a life of truth and justice, of beauty and of goodness, of saintliness and love, since these aspirations are part of ourselves and we are part of the universe; and we cannot comprehend very well how Sub-

LOAVES AND FISHES

stance or the Absolute could create conscious personalities having these desires and fancies!

That these are metaphysical theories which cannot be proved may be freely admitted. But show me a metaphysical theory which can! Certainly Monism (itself a metaphysical theory, in its last analysis) cannot, nor can any of the mechanistic theories of today. But if survival be proved by the accumulation of concrete evidence in its favor, then these views are automatically disproved, and shown to be untrue. Some spiritual conception of the universe is necessitated; *not* a return to some anthropomorphic God, be it emphasized, nor to the dogmas of theological orthodoxy, but a spiritual philosophy, based upon and sustained by the central fact of human survival. It is this which alone gives meaning to life, and sustains and animates it.

Why are we here? Why does life manifest at all? In discussing this question in my *Life: Its Origin and Nature*, I said:

" . . . Doubtless the most obvious reply to this question would be that it is the innate property or quality of living matter thus to express and perpetuate itself. The desire for expression is universal—to live, to create. It is second only to self-preservation. Yet, if mere perpetuation were the object, and nothing more, what a futile world it would be! Many of the lower forms of life die immediately after they have procreated (*i.e.*, the males) while the females lay their eggs, which are hatched out into similar living creatures, which in turn go through the same process, and so on *ad infinitum* and *ad nauseam*. To what end? If there be no evolu-

LOAVES AND FISHES

tion and no meaning to life, it would indeed be a curious fantastic world in which we live!

"If life has any meaning, it must be a psychological meaning. Is the object of being to perfect a high spiritual consciousness in man? That might be a rational view of the facts, provided there were some object in view in thus perfecting it. Is there an ultimate destiny and utility for consciousness? If there be some form of permanence for that consciousness—yes! If there be none, it is hard to see the reason for its evolution and perfection. . . .

"And the whole physical Universe? What is the meaning of that? Western science has no answer. It says: Let us take things as we find them, without seeking for ultimate causes. Oriental philosophy, on the other hand, has concerned itself greatly with such metaphysical speculations. Their belief is that this entire physical universe of ours is moving in a sort of cycle; it becomes active, dynamic, expresses itself in form and life, and then gradually becomes formless, inactive, static—in which condition it remains for a certain period of time before again becoming manifest, and so on forever, perpetually expressing itself in a series of cyclic activities. Whether such an idea represents anything like the truth we have, of course, no means of knowing—or rather of proving scientifically.

"At all events, Life has a meaning and a purpose in and for itself. It strives, it perfects, it manifests. Whether this constant effort on the part of life has any ultimate, cosmic significance must depend upon the destiny of life itself. Our interpretation of the meaning

LOAVES AND FISHES

and significance of life will thus depend upon the view we take of the nature of the Cosmos; and the nature and significance of this will, in turn, depend partly upon insight and philosophy, and partly upon scientific researches—which are thus destined to serve as torches to illumine the road which we must ultimately travel. . . .”

XV

CONCLUSION

IN the foregoing pages, I have endeavored to present an intelligible account of modern spiritual philosophy, and of the life and works of Jesus, paying particular attention to His miracles, which have in the past been subjected to such bitter hostility and criticism.

I trust that I have shown that, in the light of psychical phenomena, they become rational and understandable, and hence acceptable to us as genuine phenomenal occurrences. No longer is it necessary for us to reject them as 'impossible,' and 'contrary to the laws of Nature.' We may accept them as actual occurrences, not absolutely unique and miraculous, it is true, but as examples of genuine supernormal manifestations of a psychic nature, the underlying laws of which Christ evidently understood and in accordance with which He worked.

In this sense, therefore, the present book may be considered eminently constructive. Shorn of hindering mythical elements, the wonderful healings performed by Christ (and other miraculous phenomena) assume new importance and significance; His teachings assume new meanings, and His life becomes one of sublimity and grandeur.

We have already seen that the Apostles regarded the

LOAVES AND FISHES

resurrection of Christ as proof positive of eternal life, as incontestable evidence of the fact that He 'rose from the dead' and continued to live in a spiritual body in a spiritual world.

Yet, if survival be a fact, this same phenomenon occurs at the end of the earthly life of every individual; the phenomenon is *universal*, and, perceived in this light, is indicative of the fact that immortality is man's natural heritage, and that he can, in all truth, anticipate with confidence his own freedom and survival in a spiritual world of continued activity, progress and happiness.

The present generation enjoys the advantage over all previous generations of being in possession of a concrete mass of evidence in favor of survival, just as it benefits materially through the advances made by modern physical science.

Facts have now supplemented the older faiths and beliefs of mankind, and have shown us the truths underlying the basic religious teachings which have stimulated the minds of men since the dawn of history, proving to us that, despite the mythical elements surrounding these beliefs, there lies within them a kernel of truth indicative of the fact of human continuity and survival.

This was the core and central element of Christ's teachings, which have thus been verified and substantiated by our more modern scientific investigations.

It is my hope that this preliminary attempt to offer a credible and rational interpretation of the life of Christ may serve to stimulate others to re-study it from

LOAVES AND FISHES

this viewpoint; and, in turn, that a wider recognition of, and interest in, these newer researches may result from this first attempt at an interpretive portrayal of the psychic life of Christ.

REFERENCES

(ESPECIALLY TO PSYCHIC PHENOMENA)

It has been thought that certain references to books dealing with psychic phenomena might be of value to the reader, who might perhaps care to pursue the subject further. The *general* subject is, of course, incapable of being covered in any adequate manner, since the literature upon it is enormous. Most of this I must assume to be familiar material.

For a discussion of the supernatural elements in the Biblical accounts, I might refer to *Supernatural Religion* (Anon.), in three volumes; the Reverend A. B. Bruce's *Miraculous Elements in the Gospels*; Doctor George B. Cutten's *Psychological Phenomena of Christianity*, and references contained therein, in addition to the works mentioned in the text. Sceptical writers are represented by Thomas Paine, Voltaire, Ingersoll and McCabe. Renan's *Life of Jesus* is of course classic. The Reverend Charles H. Vail's *The World's Saviors* is a useful little book for comparisons of the life of Christ with other great teachers. Professor T. K. Oesterreich's *Possession: Demoniacal and Other*, is an invaluable reference work on this subject; see also Doctor John L. Nevius, *Demon Possession and Allied Themes*, for accounts of contemporary 'possession' cases in China.

Innumerable books have of course been written on the Resurrection. From our present standpoint, reference might be made to the Chapter on this subject in Doctor James H. Hyslop's *Psychical Research and the Resurrection*. William James' *Varieties of Religious Experience* covers a wide range of topics, illuminating all of them. Doctor George B. Cutten's *Speaking with*

LOAVES AND FISHES

Tongues gives a useful historical résumé of this subject. The critical writings of White, Draper, Lecky and others are of great historic value. Mention must here be made to the work of Doctor Eugene Crowell, *The Identity of Primitive Christianity and Modern Spiritualism*, in two volumes. A curious old work is also in existence, entitled *An Encyclopædia of Biblical Spiritualism*, by Moses Hull. T. J. Hudson's *Law of Psychic Phenomena* and his *Scientific Demonstration of a Future Life* have chapters devoted to the miracles of the Old and New Testaments. A curious old book, *The Occult Life of Christ*, by Alexander Smyth, based on alleged 'communications,' might be consulted; a very worth-while pamphlet by Doctor Abraham Wallace, is entitled *Jesus of Nazareth*, and contains many good points and suggestions.

Coming, now, to psychical research proper, and the evidences afforded by psychic phenomena, I may be more explicit.

The great storehouse for this material is of course the *Proceedings* and *Journals* of the various Psychical Research Societies; also the books and *Bulletins* of the Boston Society and our own American Psychical Institute (New York). These comprise more than a hundred bulky volumes, closely packed with carefully investigated and well-evidenced material. Their perusal cannot be omitted by any student of these problems. *Phantasms of the Living*, in two volumes, by Gurney, Myers and Podmore, deals with apparitions coinciding with death. Mr. Frederic W. H. Myers' *Human Personality* is classic, and touches upon the problems of religion and especially Christianity in many places. Charles Richet's *Thirty Years of Psychical Research* and my own *The Story of Psychic Science* give detailed summaries of this subject, and treat it both historically and critically. 'Histories of Modern Spiritualism' have

LOAVES AND FISHES

been written by Frank Podmore, Sir Arthur Conan Doyle, J. Arthur Hill, and others. Doctor Nandor Fodor's *Encyclopædia of Psychic Science* covers nearly every topic at some length, and semi-critically. The general literature upon this subject is voluminous.

Coming to more specific problems:

Telepathy and Clairvoyance are treated in a thoroughly scientific manner in Doctor J. B. Rhine's *Extra-Sensory Perception*. Other valuable books are Doctor Tischner's *Telepathy and Clairvoyance*, Mr. Upton Sinclair's *Mental Radio*, and Doctor Eugène Osty's *Supernormal Faculties in Man*.

Apparitions are treated critically in *Phantasms of the Living* (above mentioned), Frank Podmore's *Apparitions and Thought Transference*, and M. Camille Flammarion's books—*The Unknown*, *Haunted Houses*, his three volumes on *Death*, etc.

Premonitions have been discussed in various lengthy papers in the many volumes of the S. P. R. *Proceedings*. The same is true of *trance* phenomena, automatic writing, crystal gazing, dowsing (water finding), and various spiritualistic phenomena, both mental and physical.

For levitation see Olivier Leroy's *Levitation*. For materialization, consult Doctor von Schrenck-Notzing's *Phenomena of Materialization*; Doctor Gustave Geley's *Clairvoyance and Materialization* and his book *From the Unconscious to the Conscious*. The phenomena observed in the presence of D. D. Home are recorded in the Earl of Dunraven's *Experiences in Spiritualism with D. D. Home*; also in Sir William Crookes' *Researches in Spiritualism*, etc. Home's own writings are full of valuable material, as are those of his widow. Various detailed and circumstantial accounts may be found in the official publications of the Psychical Research Society.

LOAVES AND FISHES

Coming to the evidence for *survival*, Myers' book must again be referred to, as well as the many lengthy Reports in the *Proceedings* of the S. P. R. This evidence has now become so strong that nearly all psychic investigators consider it a working theory, while many eminent men of science have, as we know, become quite convinced of the *fact*. The evidence is indeed most impressive.

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